

KILL ~~THE~~ BILL

JOIN PROTESTS
ACROSS
BRITAIN THIS
WEEKEND
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AFTER CHAUVIN—
OUR FIGHT ISN'T OVER
US ACTIVISTS SPEAK OUT ON HOW
TO WIN JUSTICE >>Pages 10&11

Socialist Worker

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**'NO MORE FUCKING LOCKDOWNS.
LET THE BODIES PILE HIGH IN THEIR
THOUSANDS' BORIS JOHNSON**

THE BODIES PILED HIGH FOR PROFIT

BORIS JOHNSON cares for profit, not lives. This has been clear throughout the pandemic as his government failed at every stage to limit the spread of the virus.

But his comment about avoiding lockdowns at any cost, revealed this week, underlines his disdain for ordinary people.

He not only said it—he did it. The mass deaths were the price he and his allies were willing to pay.



Thousands hospitalised before lockdown



...but Johnson refused to heed warnings

Johnson's failures through three lockdowns, a futile tier system and 127,000 deaths were designed to keep big business raking in cash.

Now Johnson and the Tories cannot be allowed to escape

Kicking him and the rest of his corrupt government out of office has never been more crucial.

Anger at the Tories needs to be taken on to the streets and into workplaces to hold Johnson and his profit-thirsty friends to account for the horror they have caused.

IDEAS

Sport—whose game are we playing?

BILLIONS OF people globally love, participate in and watch sport.

Sport offers escapism. But it also highlights collectivity that is suppressed in capitalist society.

It's a huge market to make profits from. And it can be easily used for reactionary purposes.

>>Pages 14&15

SCOTLAND



Independence fight is back on the streets

PROTESTS FOR Scottish independence are set for Saturday in Glasgow, Edinburgh and Dundee.

An independence referendum is a key issue in the 6 May elections.

But the Scottish National Party has no intention of really fighting for one. We need bigger mobilisations.

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STATE

How cop infiltrated the SWP and abused a woman

THE Undercover Policing Inquiry heard last week from "Madeleine".

She described how Vince Miller infiltrated the Socialist Workers Party in the 1970s.

"The real subversion is the behaviour of the police," she said.

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Get Johnson and the Tories out now. Full coverage and analysis >>Pages 3, 4&5



THE THINGS THEY SAY

'It's vital for all of us to show that this is not all about some expensive, politically correct, green act of ... er ... of ... er ... of bunny hugging'

Prime minister **Boris Johnson** announces his big plan for the environment

'Bunny hugger'

Twitter bio of **Greta Thunberg** after Boris Johnson made his speech

'Prince Andrew is one of the most unpopular members of the royal family and wannabe stars aren't exactly queuing up to play him'

Casting agent for television series **The Crown**

'I'm not an expert on interior decoration but it seemed like a perfectly nice flat to me. I'd have been very happy to live there.'

Gavin Barwell, former chief of staff to the prime minister



UPS takes spy in the cab to a whole new exploitative level

A WORKER for delivery firm UPS has revealed a hellish new surveillance plan from bosses.

A member of Local 886 in the Teamsters union in the United States posted online, "Package car drivers are some of the most tracked and monitored people in the country."

"With the delivery of each bar-coded package, we let our customers know where we are and where their package was left."

"Beyond that though, UPS vehicles are full of reporting hardware."

"This system reports our vehicle location, how many times we back up, and little things like the time between when we kill the ignition and the door opening."

"We're even instructed on which pocket to keep a pen

in. But much more is coming.

A depot in Oklahoma City is part of a test run by the company to install audio and video surveillance inside our cabin. Driver-facing cameras will "shoot high definition video and use artificial intelligence to track and analyse drivers' movements—from taking a drink, to yawning, to scratching our faces."

"These cameras are a ruthless measure designed to squeeze more productivity from their employees."

"Many of us have been forced into mandatory overtime because of the surge of covid-related deliveries."

"Workers at UPS are often forced into driving to the government-mandated cutoff of 60 hours a week."

"People are exhausted and the company keeps demanding more and more."

"The technology isn't just about tracking us and questioning our bathroom breaks."

"It's also an opportunity for UPS to undermine the Teamsters Union, which represents the majority of its labour force."

LABOUR'S candidate in the Hartlepool by-election has plumbed new depths in pandering to the right. Presumably to show his "patriotic" credentials, Dr Paul Williams' team distributed leaflets for St George's day. They were made up almost entirely of the St George's cross beloved by various racist and far right groups. Williams tweeted, "Happy St. George's Day to everyone in Hartlepool! I hope you have a great day and let me know if you pop one of these up in your window."

Labour is flagging

LORDS A'LEECHING. You will be relieved to learn that it has been confirmed that members of the House of Lords can claim £162 for making a video call tribute to prince Philip.

Sitting at home and spouting sycophantic guff qualifies for the Lords "attendance allowance" payment.

Tinker, tailor soldier, Labour spy?

SOMEONE AT the Daily Mail newspaper has been reading a bit too much Le Carre. There is a mole at the heart of government.

The headline in a recent article was "Hunt for Labour's No 10 moles taking revenge on Boris for Cummings' war on Whitehall chiefs".

The fiction, sorry article, said, "The moles—Labour-sympathising civil servants—are believed to have played a key role in triggering the lobbying scandal which has allowed Sir Keir's party to construct a narrative of 'Tory sleaze' by leaking details of David Cameron's contacts with ministers and officials."

"They are also suspected of using leaks to try to 'sabotage' the Brexit withdrawal negotiations last year, and to provide advance notice to the Labour leader about government policies—giving him time to structure his responses."

That would explain why Starmer is doing so well. "The Tory spy-hunters believe a 'cell' of Labour supporters, centred on the Cabinet Office, was activated last year." An "activated cell"! It's time to play by Eton rules.

Mail demands British jobs for British dogs

DILYN, THE mischievous Tory Jack Russell cross adopted by Boris Johnson and Carrie Symonds in 2019, will be played by an Italian dog called Marco in a forthcoming TV drama.

As a "source" who wasn't made up by the Daily Mail put it, "You'd have thought there would be a lookalike for Dilyn a little bit closer to home. "Surely it should have been a British dog playing him?"

Among his alleged misdeeds, Dilyn has been accused of cocking his leg over the handbag of a departing Downing Street aide, gnawing antiques

at Chequers and taking an unfortunate amorous interest in the leg of Dominic Cummings.

That the nation's top dog could be played by a foreigner is the final sign of the decline of empire or Britain going to the dogs or something.

Robinson says he is not racist

TOMMY Robinson, founder of the English Defence League, told the High Court last week he is "not racist".

He is fighting a libel claim brought against him by a Syrian teenager.

Jamal Hijazi was filmed being attacked at his Huddersfield school in October 2018.

Robinson claimed Jamal was "not innocent and he violently attacks young English girls in his school".

Meanwhile, the New York Times newspaper has published a long investigation into Robinson.

It confirms many of the items in Socialist Worker's dossier from 2019.

It adds some detail on who paid for Robinson's London rallies in 2018.

It says, "Robert Shillman, a wealthy Trump supporter, was a Middle East Forum donor, though he declined to disclose who paid for the rally. But a person involved in organising it, said Mr Shillman, the chief executive of the technology company Cognex Corp., was a major funder of the rally. Middle East Forum internal communications also describe Mr Shillman's involvement in funding for Mr Robinson."

"Mr Shillman has previously been publicly identified as funding another project with Mr Robinson."

"Mr Robinson said he had never spoken to Mr Shillman but wished he had been able to thank him for 'all his shekels,' a reference to the Israeli currency that is also a turn of phrase sometimes favoured by antisemitic conspiracy theorists."

PPE scam emails

READERS MAY recall Ayanda Capital, a private family fund whose consultant, Andrew Mills, simultaneously served as an adviser to Liz Truss and helped broker a bungled £252 million PPE deal.

The government bought but didn't use 50 million unsafe face masks. Mills signed off his emails with a signature bearing the words, "Adviser to UK Board of Trade". Subtle?

An unnamed civil servant explained, "Can we expedite this one please? It's a big opportunity and we are close to losing it."

"Our contact has close ties so wouldn't be a good outcome." How much Mills made from us is unknown.

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'Let bodies pile up' to save bosses' profits—Johnson

by SADIE ROBINSON

"LET THE bodies pile high in their thousands." That was what Tory prime minister Boris Johnson said on 30 October last year, in response to the idea that there could be further lockdowns.

"No more fucking lockdowns—let the bodies pile high in their thousands," he is alleged to have said. It was a deliberate, conscious decision to send more people to their deaths because Johnson put bosses' profits before ordinary people's health.

Johnson is said to have made the comment after he was forced to agree to a second lockdown last year. Scientists and even Tory ministers had called for a second lockdown throughout September and October.

Johnson kept ignoring them—as cases and death rates soared.

There were an average of 2,200 new virus cases a day at the start of September. By the week of 14 September this had nearly doubled to 4,000.

Still Johnson resisted imposing more restrictions, before being eventually pushed into it at the end of October. At that point, new cases averaged around 6,000 a day.

Just ten days earlier Johnson had told MPs in the House of Commons that the idea of a new lockdown was "the height of absurdity".

Army

But at the 30 October meeting minister Michael Gove gave a dire warning of what would happen without a second lockdown. "We will be forced to put the army on the doors of hospitals to turn the sick away as the NHS will be overwhelmed," he said.

"We will not be forgiven and the Tories will be driven from power."

Gove and other Tories who called for more restrictions didn't do so because of concern for our health.

JOHNSON AND his adviser Dominic Cummings oversaw disaster

FIGURE IT OUT

46,229

Recorded coronavirus deaths in Britain as of 30 October—the day Johnson opposed new lockdown restrictions

127,428

Recorded coronavirus deaths as of last Sunday. Johnson and his government are responsible for tens of thousands of unnecessary deaths

They were focused on the damage that a deadly second wave of the virus could do to their party.

But the warnings were enough to force Johnson to agree.

The Sage group of scientists that advises the government had called for a two-week "circuit breaker" on 21 September to be imposed immediately.

"Not acting now to reduce cases will result in a very large epidemic with catastrophic consequences," it warned.

Sage said the second wave would be more deadly than the first. And it would "fall disproportionately on the frailest in our society, [people

on] lower incomes and BAME communities". It was right.

On 21 September, there were 4,368 recorded new cases of Covid-19, and 11 deaths. By 30 October, there were 24,405 recorded new cases and 274 deaths. It would get much, much worse.

Some 68,053 new cases were recorded on 8 January, and 1,325 deaths. Total recorded deaths on 30 October last year were 46,229. By last Sunday the figure was 127,428.

Boris Johnson is responsible for the unnecessary deaths of tens of thousands of people. He should go now—along with the rest of the murderous Tory government.

The failures behind the 2nd wave

BORIS JOHNSON blames the emergence of a new Covid-19 variant for the second wave of coronavirus in Britain. This variant, which first appeared in Kent, wasn't identified until November.

But the evidence that new restrictions were needed was there months before.

On 1 July, the rolling average of new daily cases stood at 576—the lowest number recorded. By 22 August, daily cases had doubled.

Johnson brought in the "rule of six" on 14 September, limiting the numbers of people who could mix together. But workplaces, schools, colleges and universities were exempt.

A week later, The Sage group of scientists that advises the government recommended a circuit-breaker. Cases were nearly at 6,000 a day.

Johnson kept resisting a new lockdown, bringing in more minor restrictions instead.

On 14 October, the government introduced a tier system with varying restrictions across England. Cases continued to rise. On 5 November, it was forced to impose a four-week lockdown—yet still kept schools open.

There were last-minute changes to advice over Christmas, but the government still said people could mix on Christmas day.

Soaring virus cases caused a third lockdown in January, when daily cases passed 60,000 for the first time. By the end of March there were 150,000 deaths with Covid-19 cited on the death certificate.

More than half were from the second wave.

Cases expected to rise

THE REOPENING of schools and colleges has led to rising numbers of coronavirus outbreaks.

Between 22 and 28 March, the week before the Easter holidays, there were 107 outbreaks of the virus in education settings. Public Health England figures show that 52 of them were in primary schools and 30 in secondary schools.

There had been a total of 96 the previous week and 49 the week before that.

Between 5 and 11 April, when most educational settings were closed for Easter, the

number of outbreaks fell to six.

Cases across Britain have fallen significantly since the start of the year. But as the Tories lift lockdown restrictions, the rate of decline has slowed. More easing of restrictions—without putting proper safety measures in place—will send cases rising again.

Scientists expect a third wave of the virus to hit Britain later this year. Modelling from scientists at Imperial College London predicts that the Tory roadmap out of lockdown could lead to 15,700 more deaths in England by next summer.

Opening caused rise

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IN THIS WEEK

1992

Uprising in Los Angeles

PEOPLE IN Los Angeles rose up in riots after police were acquitted of the beating of motorist Rodney King, which had been caught on video.

The uprising spread across the city over five days.



Corruption and sleaze hard-wired into Johnson and Tories

by SIMON BASKETTER

BEHIND THE rows between the Tories, there's very real evidence that being friends with the government is good for business.

Boris Johnson personally assured billionaire Sir James Dyson that he would "fix" a tax issue. This meant Dyson's employees would not have to pay extra tax if they came to Britain during the pandemic.

As a result the government has launched an internal inquiry into the alleged cronyism.

But Johnson then responded by claiming "if you think that there's anything remotely dodgy, or rum, or weird or sleazy" about the deal "you're out of your mind."

And it was "completely the right thing to do" to get more equipment to help fight the pandemic.

The Labour Party has accused Johnson of being personally involved in "sleaze" after texts were leaked by his former aide Dominic Cummings.

Labour has called for an urgent investigation into the prime minister's conduct by the Liaison Committee of senior MPs. Yet the head of the committee Tory MP Sir Bernard Jenkin said ministers should not be "locked away in ivory towers".

He added people should not be unable to contact them and should be able to carry out conversations in private, at the risk of stifling "proper conversation".

Approve

Meanwhile, Johnson's special envoy to the Gulf quit last week, after two months in the job. Lord Udney-Lister is the prime minister's longest-standing aide.

As Johnson's deputy London mayor and as mere "Sir" Edward Lister between 2011 and 2016, he helped to approve £4 billion of property schemes for developers he went on to work for.

In 2018, he brokered China's deal to buy the Royal Mint site in London in his capacity as a non-executive director of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO), then run by Johnson.

At the time, he was paid by two

BACK STORY

This is not the first time the Tories have been embroiled in corruption scandals in the past year

● In February an associate of health secretary Matt Hancock received a multimillion-pound government contract for the supply of PPE

● Documents published by the department of health and social care last week showed that his firm was awarded a £14.4 million contract for the provision of isolation gowns last April

other firms connected to the deal. The property consultancy advising China and buying the site on its behalf.

And Delancey, the property company run by Jamie Ritblat, a Tory donor, who owned the site.

Last year, at the height of the pandemic, Udney-Lister invited Ritblat to advise him on strategy in the construction sector.

Commercial

Minutes of a meeting in which Delancey's commercial interests were discussed state that Udney-Lister had "previously undertaken advisory work" for the company.

In fact, he was paid by the company and remains on its payroll, according to the House of Lords register of interests.

Udney-Lister, known in Conservative circles as "Steady Eddie", has retired to spend more time with his money.

While at the FCO, Udney-Lister was the director of a company aiming to build the "next Dubai" in Libya.

The disclosure casts light on Johnson's remark that a group of "wonderful guys" from Britain planned to turn Sirte, the Libyan coastal city, into the "next Dubai".

And that the only thing they needed to do was "clear the dead bodies away and then they'll be there".

On other pages...

Boris Johnson preference of dead bodies over lockdowns >>>Page 3



BORIS JOHNSON and the sleazy Tories are feeling the pressure as corruption scandals mount

Thousands spent 'renovating' flat while millions are overcrowded

BORIS JOHNSON has renovated his flat in Number 11 Downing Street at reported costs of up to £200,000 that could land both him and his party in legal trouble.

Prime ministers get up to £30,000 a year of public money to pay for housing maintenance.

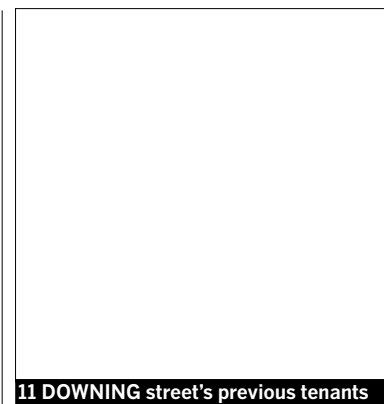
But Johnson's former chief adviser Dominic Cummings alleged he planned to have donors "secretly pay" for the work on his flat.

Johnson lives in a four-bedroom flat with his fiancée and son—despite those on benefits having their payments slashed if they have "extra" bedrooms.

Posho magazine Tatler reported that work was completed in early March to turn the flat from former prime minister Theresa May's "John Lewis furniture nightmare" into a "high society haven".

Downing Street made assurances Johnson has done nothing wrong and said he had, "acted in accordance with the appropriate codes of conduct and electoral law" throughout.

Last Friday Cabinet Office Minister Lord True said, "Any costs of wider refurbishment in



11 DOWNING street's previous tenants

this year have been met by the prime minister personally."

But reports say, despite Johnson's £150,000 salary, the Conservative Party received a £58,000 donation for the flat.

Registered

Tory peer Lord Brownlow donated the whole amount last year "to cover the payments the party has already made on behalf of the soon to be formed 'Downing Street Trust'—of which I have been made chairman".

The trust, which Johnson was trying to set up, should be

registered with the Electoral Commission.

And political parties have to report donations and loans to the commission if they surpass £7,500. MPs must also declare any donations to the Commons Register of Members' Financial Interests within at least 28 days.

Cummings said this was "unethical, foolish, possibly illegal and almost certainly broke the rules on proper disclosure of political donations if conducted in the way he intended".

He added, "I would be happy to tell the cabinet secretary or Electoral Commission what I know concerning this matter."

The Electoral Commission is now establishing if the donations are within its remit to investigate.

Whether the commission launches a formal investigation or not, Cummings' planned appearance to a parliamentary select committee next month may provide more details.

The prime minister living in scandalous luxury as 23 million households are classed as overcrowded—proving deadly in the pandemic—shows it's one rule for them, another for us.

Labour's feeble response fails to trouble the Tories

THE LABOUR Party's response to the slew of corruption scandals and revelations has failed to trouble either Boris Johnson or the Tories.

With just over a week before elections in England, Scotland and Wales, the Tories are sitting comfortably ahead of Labour in the polls. This is despite more than a year of catastrophe and scandal.

Right wing Labour MPs are frustrated that Starmer has not made Labour more popular than it was under left wing leader Jeremy Corbyn. Some have even gone as far as to criticise Starmer for refusing to challenge the Tories.

Now Starmer and his leading MPs have accused the government of being mired in "Tory sleaze." Starmer even suggested that it could a "sackable offence" for a minister not to declare meetings with bosses.

It seemed to be a shift from the days when Starmer refused to call for Tory minister Robert Jenrick to be sacked for apparently granting favours to



Weak—Labour's deputy leader Angela Rayner

billionaire Richard Desmond.

Yet instead of blasting the Tories for helping bosses profit from the pandemic, Labour criticised them for not doing it "responsibly." Rather than fuelling the anger at the Tories, Labour called for several inquiries and appearances in parliament "so the stench can be dispelled."

In an interview on Monday, Labour shadow minister Kate Green said there needed to be more inquiries to make sure bosses could lobby the government with "transparency" and "accountability".

But this has done nothing to inspire the ordinary people Labour hopes will vote for it in elections.

Labour's deputy leader Angela Rayner was asked on Sunday why Labour was doing poorly in the polls. She replied, "The most important thing I have to say about Labour is many people are starting to realise that Labour has changed."

Starmer's Labour is desperate to prove that it can be a "responsible" government. And this means refusing to do anything that could threaten the interests of big business—even as it faces disaster in elections.

Cummings and Tories' war

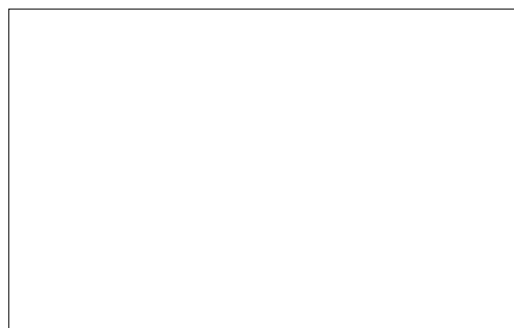
MANY OF the leaks about Boris Johnson's corruption and failures apparently come from his former top adviser Dominic Cummings.

Cummings is reportedly preparing to blame Johnson for the government's disastrous handling of the pandemic, when he appears at a hearing in front of MPs next month.

He is set to claim that he advised Johnson to impose lockdown restrictions sooner, but that he was ignored.

Cummings has also said that Johnson had fallen "far below" levels of "competence" and that, "urgent parliamentary inquiry into the government's conduct over the Covid crisis" was needed.

An "ally" of Cummings told the right wing Times



Symonds, Johnson and Cummings in happier times

newspaper, "he was pushing the prime minister hard to lock down sooner in the autumn and he has lots of evidence that shows that his decision to delay led to devastating consequences."

In fact, Cummings is also said to have been an early supporter of the "herd immunity" strategy—letting the virus run rampant so that businesses could stay open.

His approach in February last year was reportedly, "herd immunity, protect the economy, and if that means some pensioners die, too bad."

Cummings now denies this. But for months he was at the top of a government that repeatedly put profit ahead of ordinary people's lives.

None of the warring Tories can be trusted now.

Socialist Worker WHAT WE THINK

CAPITALISM MEANS MONEY FOR WAR, NOT HEALTH

PEOPLE STARVE, there's not enough cash for health or education, for action on climate chaos or to create jobs—but there's always money for war.

Despite the Covid-19 pandemic ripping through society, causing economic and health crises, total global military expenditure rose to almost \$2 trillion (£1,428 billion) last year.

That's an increase of 2.6 percent according to the analysis published this week published by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (Sipri).

The pandemic has caused global production to decrease by 4.4 percent. Yet military spending saw the biggest year on year rise since 2009.

The United States, China, India, Russia and Britain were the five largest military spenders in 2020. Combined they account for 62 percent of global military spending.

The US maintains its spot as the top military purchaser. In 2020 its military spending reached £561 billion, an increase of 4.4 percent since 2019.

Sipri researcher Dr Diego Lopes da Silva, said, "We can say with

some certainty that the pandemic did not have a significant impact on global military spending in 2020."

Layers of the ruling class have been pushing the myth that "we're all in it together" and that unity is the only way out of the pandemic. But increases in military spending debunks this myth.

This report reveals capitalist priorities.

India only spends one percent of its GDP on health which has paved the way for over 300,000 daily new Covid-19 infections.

Yet the military is so vital to protect profits, that over the pandemic, it has increased military spending by £1.3 billion. In Britain Boris Johnson let Covid-19 rip

“ Britain for the second year running is the fifth largest war spender

through society resulting in almost 4.5 million infections and 130,000 deaths. The NHS has been pushed to the brink and many health workers receive poverty wages.

Yet Britain for the second year running is the fifth largest war spender, directing £42.5 billion to death and destruction. That's an increase of 2.9 percent since before the pandemic.

Some of that budget has been spent on a new aircraft carrier, Queen Elizabeth, which has been deployed to the Indo-Pacific area.

It will ramp up warmongering. The British carrier strike group includes Queen Elizabeth and 18 F-35B stealth fighters, two destroyers, two frigates and two support ships. It will sail through the disputed South China Sea on its way to East Asia.

Capitalism develops from competition between companies into violent imperialist rivalries.

The interests of large companies are intertwined with the state. In the name of national interest, the state will back these companies with military and political power.

And instead of cooperation, the crisis has seen ruling classes reach for more bombs, guns and missiles.

ISRAEL'S APARTHEID CRIME

HUMAN RIGHTS Watch is the latest major organisation to accuse Israel of apartheid. In a detailed report released on Tuesday the mainstream and widely respected NGO said Israel is guilty of crimes of apartheid against Palestinians.

It highlights how even in areas where Palestinians have limited self-rule, Israel controls them through their borders, airspace and registry of people.

"In most aspects of life, Israeli authorities methodically privilege

Jewish Israelis and discriminate against Palestinians," says Human Rights Watch.

"Laws, policies, and statements by leading Israeli officials make plain that the objective of maintaining Jewish Israeli control over demographics, political power, and land has long guided government policy."

For all of that, Human Rights Watch says Israel is only guilty of crimes of apartheid in the occupied Palestinian territories—East Jerusalem, the West Bank

and the Gaza Strip. But it does acknowledge that Israel's control and persecution of Palestinians has existed since its creation in 1948.

Significantly, it says this exists "from the Jordan River to the Mediterranean Sea."

That's the whole of Palestine since 1948—regardless of Israel's "official" borders.

The report is another blow to defenders of Israel who want to deny that it is guilty of racism and apartheid. The evidence is clear—Israel is an apartheid state.

Breakfast in



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ANALYSIS

ALEX CALLINICOS



Dark web of Tory sleaze unravelled

THE MOST interesting thing about the Tory sleaze scandal is not the Boris Johnson vs Dominic Cummings grudge match, enjoyable though that is. Everyone knows these are two thoroughly unscrupulous and unpleasant individuals.

It's not even David Cameron's all-out lobbying campaign in Whitehall on behalf of Lex Greensill and his financial schemes. Cameron is as greedy as Tony Blair, but more inept.

No, what's really interesting is the political-financial underworld Lex Greensill inhabited. He got his feet under the table in Whitehall thanks to Sir Jeremy Heywood, cabinet secretary and head of the civil service until he died in 2018.

In 2011 Heywood arranged for Greensill to have a desk in the Cabinet Office. They had met when Heywood was seconded to the giant Wall Street bank Morgan Stanley in 2003-7.

Greensill was also working there before he left to set up his own company, Greensill Capital.

The Financial Times has revealed that Heywood tried to help other Wall Street pals when he returned to Whitehall. Most notably he helped Sir Simon Robey, his boss at Morgan Stanley, who also has his own firm.

Heywood went out of his way to facilitate the 2016 takeover of the chip designer Arm Holdings by Japanese conglomerate SoftBank, which was advised by Robey.

The Financial Times quoted "a former mandarin... 'Jeremy was down in the weeds of the Arm-SoftBank deal... there was amazement in Whitehall that he was doing that'.

"One former colleague remembered him... being 'star-struck' by his former banking colleagues. 'At some point he did drink the private sector Kool-Aid... there was a certain naivety, that the private sector could solve every problem.'"

Mentality

But this wasn't a personal eccentricity of Heywood's. During the heyday of neoliberalism under New Labour and Cameron, the assumption became entrenched that private capital could do things better than the state.

This was the mentality that led to the waste of public money during the pandemic as crucial contracts for PPE and test-and-trace were given to Tory business cronies.

And Heywood wasn't the only senior civil servant to benefit from the revolving door between Whitehall and the private sector. A particular flagrant example is provided by Bill Crothers. It turned out a couple of weeks ago that he was still chief government procurement officer while Greensill Capital employed him as a part-time adviser.

Crothers played an important role in Greensill's campaign—spearheaded by Cameron—to penetrate the NHS.

Greensill Capital specialised in supply chain finance. This involves making early but reduced payment to suppliers in exchange for the invoices they issued for whatever goods or services they provided.

Where the recipient of the goods or services is sure to pay, the invoices are a profitable financial asset.

Greensill started on the NHS with Earnd, a scheme that allowed employees to be paid early. This was offered free but, as the Financial Times reported, "A presentation given to one trust in December 2019—titled 'Adding Value to the NHS'—was explicit that the free funding was a foothold for Greensill to offer more complex and profitable financial products."

The article further reported that, "Employee early payment is just the start."

Happily, another "more complex and profitable product" of Greensill's has blown his firm up. He borrowed heavily to lend billions to the metal trader Sanjeev Gupta, who bought up a big chunk of the British steel industry.

But it turns out that some of the invoices on which these loans were secured were fake, and others were issued by Gupta's employees and cronies.

The Sunday Times has revealed that a pro-Trump lobbyist called Malin Baker Bogue worked for Johnson's Tory leadership campaign while on Gupta's payroll. Gupta also cultivated Labour and Scottish Nationalist politicians.

The unravelling of the financial web they spun together will probably wipe out Greensill and Gupta.

This was a lucky escape for the NHS. But when we need it most, its vast resources will attract more vultures and there will be more of the likes of Heywood to invite them in.

SCOTTISH INDEPENDENCE protest in Glasgow in 2018—now the movement is heading back to protests

Scottish independence fight is back on the streets

by HECTOR SIERRA

PROTESTS FOR Scottish independence are set for Saturday as the battle continues to keep the movement on the streets.

A rally called by the All Under One Banner group is planned for George Square in Glasgow. It's part of a day of action called by Now Scotland that will also see protests outside the parliament in Edinburgh and in Dundee.

As the 6 May Scottish election campaign is entering its final stages, the pro-independence parties say a referendum is a key issue to vote on.

The Scottish Tories and Labour Party say only a high vote for them can stop a second independence referendum (indyref2).

Speculating

Meanwhile the mainstream media have entered a panic mode, speculating what Scottish independence will mean for the currently fragile British state.

Polls say the Scottish National Party (SNP) is on course to win another majority, with Labour and the Tories falling far behind.

The SNP will claim this as a mandate for another referendum, but it has no intention of really fighting for it.

Boris Johnson has repeatedly stated he won't allow the vote to take place whilst he's prime minister.

The SNP manifesto says 2023 is the earliest a vote could take place.

And recently first minister Nicola Sturgeon said a referendum may have to be delayed until 2024 or beyond because of delays caused by coronavirus.

Sturgeon is quite comfortable maintaining the SNP's present role of managing capitalism in Scotland.

The SNP has a large apparatus entrenched in institutions that are embedded in the British state. Their

Don't let SNP force Scots to rejoin European Union

IF THERE is an independent Scotland with the SNP in charge, it will rejoin the European Union (EU).

And it will happen without a referendum.

That means any notion of independence would be hugely undermined by the EU's demands.

The EU could set borrowing limits, dictate what currency Scotland uses, impose migration

laws and relentlessly push businesses interests over the interests of ordinary people.

As Ireland has shown after Brexit, the EU will insist on a hard border with England if one country is in the EU and the other isn't.

It's outrageous that the SNP would implement such a major shift without broad democratic debate and voting.

political and economic privileges depend on that.

Left to its own devices, the party won't do anything that jeopardises its current position.

The newly-launched Alba party accuses the SNP of not going far enough.

Its manifesto includes a sentence about encouraging "peaceful demonstrations and direct action". But the thrust of it is the same focus on parliamentary and legal manoeuvres.

Permission

The Scottish TUC last week confirmed support for indyref2 and the idea that the Scottish Parliament should have the power to organise it without permission from Westminster.

It should be the right of ordinary people in Scotland to decide if a referendum happens.

The protests this weekend have to be a launchpad for much bigger mobilisations after the election. And they have to be linked to class issues such as austerity, poverty, anti-racism and action over the climate.

If there's majority support for independence on 6 May, no excuses from the SNP should be accepted. There must be maximum pressure on to set an immediate date for indyref2.

For rally and protest details go to nowscotland.scot/events

First minister Nicola Sturgeon

Wronged post workers' convictions overturned

by SAMORD

POST OFFICE bosses should be prosecuted for overseeing an outrageous miscarriage of justice, its victims have said.

Judges last week quashed the convictions of 39 former postmistresses and postmasters for theft, fraud and false accounting between 2000 and 2014.

A further 22 cases are being reviewed.

In total 736 workers were convicted of stealing money, with some imprisoned, after the Post Office installed the Horizon computer system in branches.

The system developed by the multinational company Fujitsu was flawed and showed shortfalls in their accounts that did not exist.

Judges said the company had “steamrolled” sub-postmasters in its pursuit of prosecutions, despite knowing there were serious questions over the reliability of Horizon.

Failiures

The judges said, “Post Office Limited’s failures of investigation and disclosure were so egregious as to make the prosecution of any of the Horizon cases an affront to the conscience of the court.”

The clearing of the names of 39 people follows the overturning of six other convictions in December. But some have died before their names were cleared.

Speaking after his name was cleared, Harjinder Butoy, who was convicted of theft and jailed for three years and four months in 2008, said the experience “destroyed my life for 14 years”.

He said those responsible for the scandal “need to be punished, seriously punished”.

Butoy added, “They’re just bullies, that’s all they are. Somebody needs to really, really sort this out and charge them for this.”

And Janet Skinner, who ran a post office in Hull, was imprisoned in 2007 for nine months after an alleged shortfall of £59,000.

It was a case that she said “destroyed everything”.

She was taken away from her two children and sent to prison.

After her release she lost a job offer owing to her conviction.

The CWU union said, “The lives of so many decent workers have been ruined through no faults of their own.

That’s why we’re demanding a criminal investigation against Post Office bosses.”

There were calls for former Post Office boss Paula Vennells



FORMER POSTMISTRESSES and postmasters celebrate their long-awaited justice

to repay bonuses of more than £2.2 million that she received as part of her £4.5 million earnings during her seven year tenure.

Pressure

Under pressure, Vennells has resigned from her boardroom positions at retailers Dunelm and Morrisons.

She has also stepped down from her role as a Church of England minister.

Neil Hudgell, who represented 29 of the former sub-postmasters, said the Post Office “promoted a culture of cover-up and subterfuge in the pursuit of reputation and profit.”

“They readily accepted that loss of life and liberty for many ordinary people as a price worth paying in that pursuit”, he added.



On other pages...

Sport and the system—whose game are we playing? >>>Page 14

‘We are being penalised’

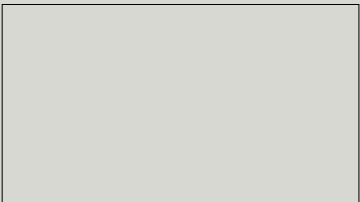
NEU UNION members at Marple and Cheadle Sixth Form College in Stockport were set to strike on Wednesday and Thursday of this week.

About 50 workers struck last Wednesday against the college’s refusal to increase pay for the last two years.

“The college claims they can’t pay up because there’s a deficit,” said NEU regional officer Jason Sharpe. “But that’s due to financial mismanagement, and the large sums spent on consultants.”

“All staff here go above and beyond what’s expected,” said picketer Wendy. “But they’ve chosen not to prioritise staff.” Striker Catherine added, “We should be paid what we deserve.”

Other strikers criticised



Strikers at Marple and Cheadle

the “huge payoff” of over £200,000 to the last head. “We’re the ones responsible for all the positive Ofsted results—but we’re being penalised,” said another picketer.

Strikers also have concerns over a coming merger with the Trafford Group. “A post I’d be eligible for in a neighbouring local authority is paying £3,000 a year more than I’m getting here,” explained one picketer.

Mike Killian

IN BRIEF

Strike against profit

by JANE BASSETT

WORKERS AT Leaways school in Hackney, east London, struck for two days last week. Pickets were supported by Hackney NEU union, Hackney Unison, Hackney Labour Party, Hackney Renters union and others.

Some 90 people joined an online rally addressed by local Labour MP Diane Abbott and Kevin Courtney, NEU joint general secretary.

The dispute started after teachers and support staff began organising and asking for union recognition, and for working conditions and pay on the same basis as others.

They also asked for proper sick pay, which is currently only seven days a year. And they



On the picket line in east London

wanted better conditions for the students they teach.

The response of Leaways’ owners, the Kedleston Group, was to sack the NEU rep on trumped-up charges.

Kedleston is a private group that runs a number of special schools across England, and is ultimately owned by the Kerry Group.

This dispute shows what the privatisation of the education system is about.

Kedleston doesn’t want unions because that cuts into their profits that come from public money that should be spent on decent learning conditions.

NEU members plan more strikes on Wednesday and Thursday of this week, and 5, 6, 11, 12, 18 and 19 May.

Messages of solidarity to **David Davies@neu.org.uk**

Defend NEU union rep John Boken

NEU UNION members at Shrewsbury Colleges Group planned to strike on Thursday of this week to defend victimised union rep John Boken.

Members at North Huddersfield Trust school also planned walkouts for Wednesday and Thursday, in defence of victimised rep Louise Lewis.

Meanwhile, NEU members at Peacehaven Heights Primary School in Sussex plan to strike on 5 May against plans to turn the school into an academy.



Troops aim to crush protests in Myanmar

Protesters have continued to take to the streets, and other ruling classes are concerned. writes **Yuri Prasad**

WILL MYANMAR see a new round of slaughter, or will regional talks last week lead to a period of relative calm?

That is the question that millions of civilians are asking after two apparently contradictory developments.

As of 23 April almost 800 people have been killed after joining democracy protests and thousands more have been detained.

Now sections of the military regime want to go on the offensive and smash the democracy movement in the way it did in 1988 and 2007. This then led to thousands being killed and tortured.

A memo, issued by the military government's top commanders in the country's capital Naypyitaw was recently discovered.

The memo made it clear that attacks on democracy protesters would continue and said, "You must annihilate them when you face them."

"Rioters have gone from peaceful demonstration to the level of armed conflict."

Officers

The memo also stated that officers must follow instructions "strictly".

On the other hand, the Asean conference of southeast Asian leaders last weekend was gravely worried about the impact of further killings.

The meeting, which included representatives from China and Myanmar, stopped short of condemning the military regime, but it did agree that the violence must stop.

Some leaders demanded the release of political prisoners. In large part that reflects a worry among the regional elite that the turmoil in Myanmar could spread to neighbouring countries—India, China and Thailand. And that instability could deter investments.

Already many global firms are worried about operating in Myanmar's gas fields after workers' strikes and demonstrations have been met by soldiers' gunfire. And,

BACK STORY

The protests in Myanmar began earlier this year and the repression against them has been brutal and deadly

●Live rounds of ammunition have been used on protesters and martial law was imposed in parts of the country in March

●The state has also tried to crush workers' resistance by raiding workers' houses to attempt to arrest union leaders

China is concerned about the spate of arson attacks on factories it owns in the country.

The unrest extends beyond the democracy movement.

Nearly 100 Myanmar troops were killed by Kachin separatist rebels near the Chinese border earlier this month. And, there is fierce fighting with other ethnic groups in many parts of the state.

Some in Myanmar's democracy movement are cheered by the weekend conference and hope the next stage will be that Asean will send observers to the country as a prelude to some sort of "humanitarian intervention".

But it would be a grave mistake to put trust in the regional powers.

They are little concerned about the nature of Myanmar's regime, and are instead solely focused on "stability"—even if that comes at the cost of democracy.

Meanwhile, the workers' districts of many big cities remain barricaded, with people arming themselves with hunting rifles and other rudimentary weapons.

Most will hope for peace and the return of democracy, but history will doubtless tell them to prepare for more war.



On other pages...

Take to the streets to kill the bill
>>Page 20

PROTESTERS SET up a barricade in Myanmar

ISRAEL

Resistance forces cops to remove barriers

PALESTINIANS under occupation in Jerusalem celebrated on Sunday night as Israeli forces removed barriers intended to stop them from gathering, following days of protests.

Protesters had resisted Israel's attempts to stop them gathering close to religious sites in Jerusalem's Old City during Ramadan. They were attacked repeatedly by Israeli riot police with tear gas and water cannon.

News reports often present the protests as clashes between Muslims and Jews over rights to religious sites.

In fact, Palestinians are resisting Israeli occupation and a decades-long attempt to drive them from the city.

Israel invaded the eastern side of East Jerusalem in 1967

and wants to claim the city as its capital. It has kept Palestinians living there under violent repression ever since.

Israelis marched through East Jerusalem chanting "Death to Arabs" on Thursday of last week.

But Palestinian protests spread across the West Bank, which is also occupied by Israel.

Resistance groups in the Gaza Strip, which Israel has kept under siege for more than a decade, launched a few dozen rockets across the militarised border.

An Israeli police spokesperson said they had removed the barriers—having spent days meting out violence—"to ensure peace and security".

Nick Clark

Protesters celebrate

INDIA

Big Pharma attempts to cash in on virus

INDIA IS in the grip of a horrendous health crisis as 350,000 new Covid-19 were recorded in just 24 hours last Sunday.

But for the country's drugs firms this is not a time for mourning—it's a time to cash in.

Big pharma bosses are demanding the

government lifts its price caps on their coronavirus vaccines so that they can make what they describe as "super profits".

The result will be that vaccines are set to become hugely more expensive, with some prices shooting up by nearly 700 percent.

For hundreds of millions of poor people that will mean being priced out of the jab.

The Serum Institute sells its Covishield vaccine to the government for £1.43 per dose, while Bharat Biotech sells its Covaxin for £1.96.

But Serum Institute boss Adar Poonawalla thinks he should be making for more—at least £9.53, he says.

There can only be one consequence of reduced vaccinations.

The virus will continue to spread—and will continue to mutate.

Ways to kill the bill

DESPITE SEVERAL large “political” strikes, the “Kill the Bill” campaign in 1971 (Socialist Worker, 14 April) failed to stop the Industrial Relations Bill. But official and unofficial resistance made the Act unworkable.

The Act’s success depended on unions being registered. It was therefore essential that unions came off the register, despite making them liable to greater legal penalties.

The TUC majority initially voted to “advise” unions not to register.

With the militant engineering union leading the way, this was overturned, in September 1971, to “instruct” unions.

“Non-cooperation” with the Act’s other institutions included boycotting the new National Industrial Relations Court.

Dockers were engaged in an unofficial militant campaign to defend jobs.

Liverpool, Hull and London dockers refused to attend the new court to answer for breaking the new law. Their stand made it more difficult for unions to recognise the court.

The incarceration of the Pentonville Five for “contempt of court” was critical. Faced with an unofficial national dock strike and growing strikes elsewhere, legal manoeuvring “sprang” the five. The jailing also shocked several big right wing unions into leaving the Act’s provisional register.

The combination of unofficial and official resistance pushed the Act into cold storage.

Dave Lyddon
Keele



Football fans deserve better than the ‘German’ model

THE EUROPEAN Super League (ESL) scandal has shown how capitalism affects every aspect of our lives.

Against the wishes of most fans, the owners of six English clubs joined this money-making venture.

If they had been successful, the ESL would have had a significant impact on the leisure time of the hundreds of thousands of working class people who go to matches.

Some are now calling for a “German” model, where fans own 50 percent of the club plus 1.

Extra fan control means that match tickets here are much more affordable.

It also probably influenced the reluctance of German clubs in backing the ESL.

And yet German football is not some socialist bubble, free of the capitalist drive for profit.

The super-rich Bayern Munich has won every single league title since 2012. In this eight-year period, it also won the German cup five times.

When Bayern CEO Karl-Heinz Rummenigge opposed the ESL because it endangered “excitement and the emotional experience in the competition” many Germans permitted themselves a wry smile.

The inequalities in German football are maybe most clear in the former East Germany.

Following reunification, football was no different to most other industries.

Wealthy Western clubs

systematically robbed clubs in the East of almost all their best players.

There is one exception to this trend. RB Leipzig was formed in the East German city in 2009 and came second in the league ten years later.

What does RB stand for? Red Bull. The team—which is hated throughout Germany—was set up as a commercial venture by the soft drinks company.

German fans rightly defend the gains which have been made here. But—in football as in life—we are a long way from achieving equality.

The fight goes on.

Phil Butland
Berlin

Permanent home work will help out the bosses

IN MANY sectors, employers are seeking to establish the home-based work of the pandemic as the norm longer term.

The move essentially privatises all of the risks and costs of working, turning the worker’s home into the workplace.

Often employers talk about the benefits of flexible working. However, it is not flexible working that is being offered.

Good quality flexible working policies, benefiting those with caring responsibilities and disabled workers, should be

negotiated and fought for by trade unions.

Home-based working, however, will lead to worker-isolation, more intensive management bullying, contract erosion, more bogus self-employment, and weakened union organisation. Workers’ power is in the physical workplace, not online.

Socialists should oppose home-working wherever employers are attempting to make it permanent beyond the Covid-19 crisis.

Mark O’Brien
Merseyside

Times ‘gaffe’ reflects institutional racism

HOW DARE Christina Lamb accuse me of racism?

Although, of course, the “we” that she refers to may be confined to the readership of the Sunday Times.

In reference to the racist “gaffes” of prince Philip, Lamb said that “secretly we rather enjoyed them”.

Racism must absolutely never be tolerated or dismissed.

I am writing this on the 28th anniversary of Stephen Lawrence’s racist murder.

A murder that was not properly investigated due to institutional racism of the police.



Did you ‘secretly enjoy’ prince Philip’s racism?

Lamb’s statement, trivialising racism, was put on the front page of The Sunday Times, pillar of the British establishment.

It illustrates that Britain is indeed still institutionally racist, no matter what the Sewell Report might have purported.

The normalisation of racist comments by The

Sunday Times requires not only an apology but a full retraction by Christina Lamb and the newspaper.

The editor’s comments that Lamb “never intended to make light of” Prince Philip’s racist remark about “slitty eyes” are nowhere near enough.

Jean Evanson
Telford

Just a thought...

Tunnel must be stopped

THE Silvertown Tunnel is a £2 billion, four-lane road crossing in Newham.

The monstrous pollution-heavy project flies in the face of the Greater London Authority vision to be carbon neutral by 2030.

Research shows that new roads pave the way for more traffic.

Why has Labour mayor Sadiq Khan given in to big business against the interests of vulnerable communities?

Challenge Khan at every mayoral election event and watch out for coming actions to Stop the Silvertown Tunnel!

Miriam Scharf
East London

Lesson from British Gas

ALL THE unions should have worked together instead of looking after themselves.

Carl Walker
On Facebook

Back Plaid in South Wales?

I SUSPECT you would ask people to vote tactically to sto the Tories (Who should socialists vote for, 21 April).

As most of the constituencies will be won by Labour, voting for them in the list is a wasted vote, especially in South Wales.

It makes more sense to vote Plaid.

Rhodri Frances
On Facebook

We’ve been here before

THERE IS a direct connection between the Police bill and the Sewell Report.

The Tories want the law changed to counter potential uprisings but also the ideology that underpins that opposition.

The extensive anti-union laws of the early Thatcher years were accompanied by continual attacks on us.

So successful was it, that after a while the word socialism was never heard.

They never give up as our continued exploitation depends on them winning the battle of ideas.

Alan Watts
South London

ACTIVISTS IN THE U.S. SPEAK OUT WHY OUR FIGHT FOR JUSTICE ISN'T OVER

Killer cop Derek Chauvin has been convicted—but the system that killed George Floyd is still taking black lives. **Sophie Squire** and **Isabel Ringrose** spoke to activists in the US about the future of the movement—and the challenges it faces now

THERE ARE big questions and debates opening up about the future of the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement after the conviction of Derek Chauvin for the murder of George Floyd.

The movement on the streets led to Chauvin becoming the first white police officer to be convicted of the murder of a black man in the state of Minnesota.

But as the verdict was announced, another life was ended by racist police brutality. Sixteen year old Ma'Khia Bryant was shot by police officer Nicholas Reardon in Columbus, Ohio, sparking angry protests in the city.

It was a grim reminder that the fight to end police brutality and racism is not over.

Jeoff, a vlogger and activist from Connecticut, told Socialist Worker he was “happy” but “surprised” to hear of Chauvin’s conviction.

“To me the verdict should’ve been obvious, but I think the surprise came because this is just so rare. It seemed like such an obvious example of guilt by the police.

“It was such an obvious example of murder. But we know the criminal justice system protects its own—that’s why I was surprised.”

It is no wonder many activists felt both relieved and surprised to hear the verdict when the system routinely protects killer cops

Phillip Stinson is a criminologist at Bowling Green state university in Ohio

who has compiled one of the most extensive databases on police violence.

Stinson found that 140 police officers have been arrested on charges of murder since 2005. But only seven of these resulted in murder convictions.

Of the seven, several had their convictions reduced to lesser offences.

Many have looked on with rightful disbelief at the fact that there could be any denial that Chauvin was guilty of murder when it was caught on camera.

But even when a phone or a police officer’s body camera captures the violence cops still go unpunished.

In some states it’s not against the rules for police officers to tamper with body cam or dashboard camera recordings.

In others police officers simply refuse to hand over incriminating footage. And

PORTLAND COPS fire pepper spray into the face of a protester with their hands up. Can the Biden administration really claim they will be ‘reformed’?

there are other ways that the cops can get away with violence.

Annon is from Portland, Oregon where Black Lives Matter protests have continued since the death of George Floyd.

He told Socialist Worker that the very nature of how the police are set up in the US means they often face little accountability.

“Police departments that aren’t under federal control don’t need to follow their regulations. For example in Portland the police department wasn’t even collecting data on shootings,” he said.

And he added that so-called “police unions” are also a problem.

“The state negotiates with the union about wages and workplace practices. The unions back policeman in any dispute and will get lawyers and do work to keep them on.

“This turns into a legal battle that usually the city loses here in Portland.”

For Chauvin to be convicted of murder despite the protections the state usually gives killer cops is a testament to the strength of the movement.

But as revolutionary socialist group Marx21 wrote, “The verdict is a taste of what justice is available through our court system, through massive struggle.

“But it does not bring George Floyd back, and while it may make some racist cops think twice, it does not stop racism or police repression on the streets.”

Beware of fa

IN MANY ways the Derek Chauvin murder verdict shows that the ruling class is desperate to keep the system intact.

The state has already seen what happens when killer cops go free.

The police killing of Michael Brown in 2014 led to massive protests across the US and the birth of the Black Lives Matter movement. Protests escalated when Brown’s killer Darren Wilson did not face a trial.

Perhaps this was part of the reason why president Joe Biden offered such warm words after the verdict in Chauvin’s trial was announced.

In a speech last Wednesday Biden said, “No one should be above the law, and today’s verdict sends that message.

“But it’s not enough. It can’t stop here.

“In order to deliver real change and reform, we can and must reduce the likelihood that tragedies like this ever can happen again.”

There is now a real danger that Biden, police chiefs and their allies will use Chauvin’s conviction as an opportunity to divert the anger of the movement into “official”—and safe—channels.

Ryan is an activist and librarian from Baltimore who describes himself as a pan-Africanist. He told Socialist

(Clockwise from left) Huge multiracial protests, such as in New York in June 2020, characterised the Black Lives Matter movement●Mural of George Floyd on the Berlin Wall in Germany● On the burning streets of Minneapolis● Flames in Los Angeles too

State already arming itself with new powers

ACROSS THE US mostly Republican politicians are pushing through or planning legislation that attempts to suppress protest. At least 29 states across the US have considered new anti-protest laws after the BLM protests last summer.

In Florida, Republican governor Ron DeSantis signed a new law that would mean those who drive through crowds of protesters could be granted immunity.

This same law will also make it easier to keep protesters in jail for longer. And it will deny activists bail up until their first court appearance.

Micah Kubic, Florida director of the American Civil Liberties Union, said in a statement, “The goal of this law is to silence dissent and create fear among Floridians who want to take to the streets. It should not be a crime to exist in public space.”

In Minnesota a new bill has been proposed that will mean those convicted of any offence while protesting will be barred from accessing student loans.

In reaction to the bill, one student activist wrote on Twitter, “Keep in mind that the Minnesota legislature is currently attempting to take away the free speech rights of young people.

“The protests worked, so they are trying to ensure that we cannot keep doing so.”

The establishment is worried by the successes of the BLM movement—and is ramping up intimidation to make sure history doesn’t repeat itself.

We’ve got to stay on the streets

ACTIVISTS ACROSS the US have highlighted the need to stay on the streets after Chauvin was found guilty. Tara wrote on Twitter, “George Floyd got the justice he deserved. Now what about Breonna Taylor? Sandra Bland? Tamla Horsford?

“We can’t go silent all because we got one victory. Let’s keep fighting.”

Protests have continued after the murder of Daunte Wright in Brooklyn Center near Minneapolis and Adam Toledo in Chicago. And protests are beginning to pull in sections of the labour movement. In St. Paul, also near Minneapolis, union members kicked out the National Guard from a prominent building devoted to the labour movement.

Jeoff says it will take a massive overhaul of the system to get the change that is needed. “The fact is the police have too much power and too much money. That’s why I think defunding the police is important.”

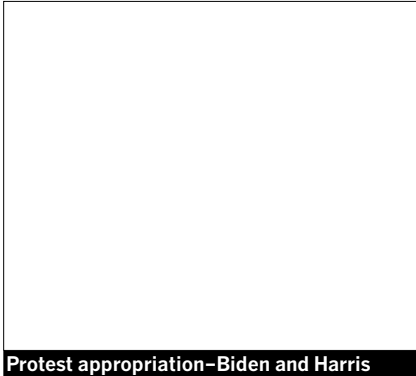
“The police don’t keep us safe and cities with the largest police budgets often have the most violence. We have to take this money away from the institution and use it for more important things like healthcare and schools.”

Ryan added, “The movement against police brutality needs to continue to make connections between the institution of policing and the system to attack the problem at the root.

“The task is to show people how racism and other forms of oppression are inextricably linked to capitalism.

“The only way to end state-sanctioned violence and anti-black terror is through abolishing the entire system.”

false friends–Joe Biden and the Democrats



Protest appropriation–Biden and Harris

Worker that, for him, the response from Biden and the establishment felt hollow.

“The response by the ruling class has been to paint the verdict as a sign of progress.

“But it also has been used to position themselves as both sympathetic to the struggle of oppressed communities and being active participants in the fight for racial equity.”

“But we know this is performative. It is a proven strategy for the ruling class to adopt progressive—and sometimes even radical—language to neutralise radical movements.”

Biden’s platitudes are in sharp

conflict with his recent actions. Just over a week before Biden’s speech he scrapped a campaign promise to create a police reform commission.

His proposed George Floyd policing bill—currently being considered in the US congress—could result in more police accountability.

If it is passed into law the bill will try to stop complained-about cops moving from station to station and will require more officers to wear body cams.

It will also ban the type of chokehold that Chauvin used to kill Floyd as well as no-knock warrants that allow cops to enter homes without warning.

The bill being passed would be another victory for the BLM movement—but it simply won’t go far enough.

Some police stations won’t have to abide by these new laws because they don’t receive federal funding. The bill also won’t apply to the FBI, customs and border protection or the drug and enforcement agency.

Biden and vice president Kamala Harris have also repeatedly said that justice has been done in this case now that Chauvin will be punished.

It’s an attempt to present Chauvin as a “bad apple” that if rooted out



Ryan says, ‘The only way to end state-sanctioned violence and anti-black terror is through abolishing the entire system’

will transform the police force. The establishment sacrificed Chauvin to save the system.

Annon pointed out that while Biden is fine to sacrifice individual cops he doesn’t want to “alienate” police departments.

“I’m not sure if Biden is going to make strong police reforms. And he certainly won’t contemplate abolition or defunding of the police after the attack on the Capitol building in January.”

The rest of the establishment is unlikely to make substantial moves to reform the police either.

In fact, finding an individual cop guilty may even slow down moves towards police reform.

US newspaper Axios reported that senior Democratic and Republican party aides have said the convictions of individual police officers for assaults on black people has actually served to reduce pressure for change in Washington.

This is because those in power rely on the police to protect their system.

Reforms now are important—and will only be won by the continuation of the movement on the streets. But ultimately protests must move beyond Biden and the Democrats and push for an end to the police and the rotten system they prop up.

WHAT WE STAND FOR

These are the core politics of the Socialist Workers Party.

INDEPENDENT WORKING CLASS ACTION

Under capitalism workers' labour creates all profit. A socialist society can only be constructed when the working class seizes control of the means of production and democratically plans how they are used.

REVOLUTION NOT REFORM

The present system cannot be patched up or reformed as the established Labour and trade union leaders say.

It has to be overthrown. Capitalism systematically degrades the natural world. Ending environmental crisis means creating a new society.

THERE IS NO PARLIAMENTARY ROAD

The structures of the present parliament, army, police and judiciary cannot be taken over and used by the working class. They grew up under capitalism and are designed to protect the ruling class against the workers.

The working class needs an entirely different kind of state — a workers' state based upon councils of workers' delegates and a workers' militia.

At most parliamentary activity can be used to make propaganda against the present system.

Only the mass action of the workers themselves can destroy the system.

INTERNATIONALISM

The struggle for socialism is part of a worldwide struggle. We campaign for solidarity with workers in other countries.

We oppose everything which turns workers from one country against those from other countries.

We oppose racism and imperialism. We oppose all immigration controls.

We support the right of black people and other oppressed groups to organise their own defence. We support all genuine national liberation movements.

The experience of Russia demonstrates that a socialist revolution cannot survive in isolation in one country.

In Russia the result was state capitalism, not socialism. In Eastern Europe and China a similar system was later established by Stalinist parties. We support the struggle of workers in these countries against both private and state capitalism.

We are for real social, economic and political equality of women.

We are for an end to all forms of discrimination against lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people.

We oppose discrimination against disabled people including those who experience mental distress.

We defend the right of believers to practise their religion without state interference.

THE REVOLUTIONARY PARTY

To achieve socialism the most militant sections of the working class have to be organised into a revolutionary socialist party.

Such a party can only be built by activity in the mass organisations of the working class.

We have to prove in practice to other workers that reformist leaders and reformist ideas are opposed to their own interests.

We have to build a rank and file movement within the unions.

To join us, turn to page 16 or go to www.swp.org.uk or phone 020 7840 5602

Socialist Workers Party online meetings



REPUBLICAN FIGHTERS in 1921

100 years since Partition—can there be a united Ireland?

BRIGHTON AND HOVE
Thu 6 May, 6.30pm
841-2142-3683

CHESTERFIELD
Thu 6 May, 6.30pm
829-532-877

DEVON AND CORNWALL
Thu 6 May, 7.30pm
865-2972-2883

DUNDEE, ABERDEEN AND PERTH
Wed 5 May, 7.30pm
894-2628-7708

GLASGOW
Thu 6 May, 7pm
879-2402-3259

HUDDERSFIELD
Wed 5 May, 6.30pm
290-168-1804

WOLVERHAMPTON AND WALSALL
Wed 5 May, 7.30pm
913-6646-7067



The Socialist Workers Party is holding online meetings during the coronavirus crisis. This is to ensure that there can still be collective local discussion, organising and actions.

Most of the meetings will be held using the Zoom system. Download the Zoom app onto your phone or computer and just before the time given for your local meeting ask to "Join a meeting".

You can then enter the number printed on this page for the appropriate meeting. **The password for all meetings is 967537.**

Make sure you look at the SWP Facebook page facebook.com/SocialistWorkersParty for news of national online meetings and other updates.

BIRMINGHAM

The Paris Commune of 1871, when workers 'stormed heaven'
Wed 5 May 7pm

281-634-5938

BOURNEMOUTH

The revolutionary ideas of Angela Davis
Wed 5 May, 7.30pm

348-905-7196

BRADFORD

After the Sewell report — how do we beat institutional racism?
Thu 6 May, 7pm

885-9187-7552

BRISTOL

Global catastrophe and the far right today
Thu 6 May, 7.30pm

688-397-748

BURNLEY AND PENDLE

Northern Ireland riots — can there be an end to sectarianism?
Wed 5 May, 7.30pm

446-409-5118

CAMBRIDGE

Kill the Bill — police, violence and the state
Thu 6 May, 7.30pm

681-800-4408

CARDIFF

The Paris Commune of 1871, when workers 'stormed heaven'
Wed 5 May, 7.30pm

630-181-4857

COLCHESTER

Riots and resistance — police, violence and the state
Thu 6 May, 7.30pm

466-478-2013

COVENTRY

The lost revolution — Germany 1918-23
Wed 5 May, 7.30pm

823-945-1917

CREWE AND STOKE-ON-TRENT

Police racism and the Mangrove Nine
Wed 5 May, 7.30pm

880-9821-5461

DUDLEY

Is Labour right to wave the Union Jack?
Wed 5 May, 7pm

7286-7291-615

EAST MIDLANDS

Can the police be reformed?
Wed 5 May, 7pm

354-874-4790

EDINBURGH

Free speech, the Tories and defending our rights
Wed 5 May, 7.30pm

431-459-112

HARLOW

Free speech, the Tories and defending our rights
Thu 6 May, 7.30pm

832-8746-7480

HOME COUNTIES

Climate change, refugees and migration
Thu 6 May, 6.30pm

872-4922-1957

KENT

45 years after Rock Against Racism — can culture fight racism?
Wed 6 May, 8.15pm

434-623-8064

LANCASTER AND MORECAMBE

The Paris Commune of 1871, when workers 'stormed heaven'
Thu 6 May, 7pm

992-204-9372

LEEDS

Booklaunch: Rebellious Daughters of History with author Judy Cox
Thu 6 May, 7pm

881-4770-0676

LIVERPOOL

The Paris Commune of 1871, when workers 'stormed heaven'
Wed 5 May 7pm

493-925-5919

LONDON: HACKNEY

Race, class and identity
Thu 6 May, 7.30pm

854-8245-8715

LONDON: HARINGEY

Is this democracy? Parliament, people and power
Wed 5 May, 7.30pm

459-388-1576

LONDON: ISLINGTON

Can Biden put the US back together again?
Thu 6 May, 7pm

874-012-7970

LONDON: NEWHAM

Greed and the Super League — how capitalism is destroying sport
Wed 5 May, 7pm

288-098-8827

LONDON: SOUTH

Free speech, the Tories and defending our rights
Wed 5 May, 7pm

497-196-1801

LONDON: SOUTH EAST

Blair to Starmer — why won't Labour oppose the Tories?
Thu 6 May, 7pm

529-913-6390

LONDON: TOWER HAMLETS

Blair to Starmer — why won't Labour oppose the Tories?
Wed 5 May, 7.30pm

818-391-0420

LONDON: WALTHAM FOREST

Is religion the opium of the people?
Wed 5 May, 7.30pm

543-023-057

LONDON: WEST AND NORTH WEST

Pamphlet launch: Capitalism and the Politics of Food
Thu 6 May, 7.30pm

870-9261-517

MANCHESTER

A revolutionary guide to trans liberation
Wed 5 May, 7.15pm

323-178-7151

NEWCASTLE

The Brixton Uprising 40 years on — what's changed?
Wed 5 May, 7pm

368-595-2712

NORWICH

Pamphlet launch — capitalism and the politics of food
Wed 5 May, 7.30pm

906-652-5299

OXFORD AND THAMES VALLEY

Climate change, anti-racism and refugees
Wed 5 May, 7pm

861-2001-6477

PORTSMOUTH AND SOUTHAMPTON

Free speech, the Tories and defending our rights
Wed 5 May, 7.30pm

488-934-2809

SHEFFIELD AND SOUTH YORKSHIRE

Lenin — a revolutionary for today
Thu 6 May, 7pm

528-174-9278

SOUTHAMPTON

Can Biden put the US back together again?
Wed 5 May, 7.30pm

381-513-5080

SWANSEA AND WEST WALES

What's behind the coup in Myanmar?
Thu 6 May, 7pm

902-964-963

TELFORD

After the Sewell report — how do we beat institutional racism?
Thu 6 May, 7.30pm

791-7178-2356

WIGAN

Alienation — how it distorts our lives
Wed 5 May, 7.30pm

913-6646-7064

YORK AND SCARBOROUGH

Young people, job losses and the fightback
Wed 5 May, 7.30pm

827-489-7492

BOOKMARKS the socialist bookshop



The Labour Party — a Marxist History
by Tony Cliff, Donny Gluckstein and Charlie Kimber, £14.99



A Rebel's Guide to Engels by Camilla Royle
£4



Does privilege explain racism? by Esme Choonara, Ken Olende, Yuri Prasad and Weyman Bennett, £3



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Nomadland is a powerful—but drippy—austerity story

This film has won plaudits and awards because it resonates with life after a decade of loss—but it's all just a bit too sentimental, writes **Nick Grant**

IT'S 2011. Fern is a widowed inhabitant of Empire, Nevada. Its gypsum mine has closed, its postcode annulled.

Her husband Bo worked there. He died in the wake of the 2008 crash.

With little pension or income she is leaving to call her van her home.

She heads off into the desert winter to find work. She does a stint at a shiny new Amazon fulfilment centre.

She befriends Linda May. They are allowed to park their homes in the company car park. Then they move on.

Fern starts to converse with working class others.

Some are travellers by choice as an affordable, greener lifestyle. Others are impelled by ill health, poverty and debt three years in the wake of that banking crash.

Without any apparent sense of historical irony they refer to themselves in cruising the vast western spaces as a tribe.

Frances McDormand as Fern and David Strathairn as Dave are pretty much the only professional actors in this tale. The others are largely playing themselves and revealing some awful and some charming backstories that grab our hearts with pity.

It is largely a white female world.

The landscape is beautifully caught in panoramic cold greys, glorious pinks at dawn and golden hours before sunsets. The camera is politely restive around small groups.

The score of piano, cello and violin suits a mood of reluctant austerity.

This is the third film by Beijing-born director Cleo Zhao.

It packs a deep emotional punch. But that's mainly because of the time of its release.



FERN'S TRAVELS take place against a beautifully filmed backdrop

What may have begun as an empathetic look back at an under-reported minority consequence of the 2008 crash in Barack Obama-time reaches us now in the wake of Trump, Covid-19 and George Floyd.

That lying, brutal, fearful world has brought intimate loss to millions. Loss of jobs, housing, health-care, pensions.

Loss of family, lovers, workmates, neighbours. Loss of black lives aplenty.

So Zhao has stumbled into acclaim that will resound far further than it

deserves to. It will probably clean up at awards ceremonies because it seems to connect with our recent collective losses.

Yet for all its whispered coping strategies—seeing each other “down the road”, living life while you can—it wallows too much in sentimentality.

Fern's circular tour is not a whimsical game as the seasons go round and round. It is a sad treadmill.

Zhao is also uncritical of the deep historical insult of these mainly white van dwellers describing themselves

as a “tribe” as they roam the lands stolen from Native Americans.

And there is an assumed benevolence towards the rapacious work regimes of Amazon.

Nomadland is about capitalism in the raw. It is about Amazon gleefully ruling the economic roost. It is about people's financial and emotional precarity.

But that requires challenge and revolt, not tolerance or pity.

Nomadland is available to stream on Disney+ from Friday 30 April

Partridge returns in familiar blend of satire and slapstick

TELEVISION

THIS TIME WITH ALAN PARTRIDGE

Starts Friday 30 April, 9.30pm, BBC1

BACK OF the net. Norwich's finest export is back for a second series where he is so desperate to belong—in front of a TV camera.

Alan Partridge, played by Steve Coogan, has crawled his way out of the career doldrums on local radio and is now presenting This Time.

It's a satirical look at the mundane magazine

programmes such as This Morning and The One Show that litter the schedules.

Alongside co-host Jennie Gresham, Partridge promises that it “covers the spectrum of human life, from aqua aerobics to abortion, from zebras to Zionism”.

There are limitations to the format. There are only so many times we can see Partridge worrying behind the scenes about the way he looks or if the producers like him.

But the strength of the cast more than makes



Coogan is pitch perfect as Alan

up for this. Co-presenter Jennie, played by Susannah Fielding, and Partridge just about manage to keep their resentment at bay.

And loyal assistant Lynn, played by Felicity Montagu, pops up periodically to massage Partridge's ego.

But as ever it's loveable Simon Denton, played by Tim Key, who steals every scene he is in.

He can't quite manage to work out the simple technology used on set, but my god he is trying.

The entire effort just about manages to strike the balance between riffing

on the mundane and collapsing into slapstick.

Nowhere is this more obvious than Partridge's item about staying with a group of silent monks, which predictably descends into farce.

Partridge's casual confidence with which he interrupts the expert guests, his occasional slide into after-dinner speaker, is pitch perfect.

For those who might have spent furlough watching their fair share of daytime TV, This Time is likely to hit just right.

Sarah Bates

DIGITAL THEATRE

GHOSTS

Access the app at nationaltheatrescotland.com until 9 May

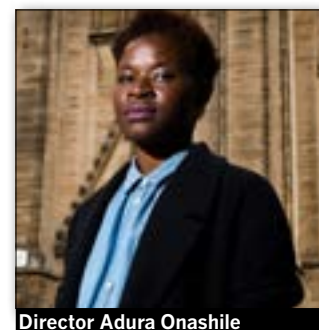
TAKE A walk westwards along Ingram Street in Glasgow city centre. Cut across Glassford Street and, via the famous Buchanan Street, down to Dunlop Street.

Almost every step you have taken has been on a street named reverentially after one of the city's slave-owning “Tobacco Lords” of the 17th and 18th centuries.

Ghosts, written and directed by Adura Onashile, is the latest work by the National Theatre of Scotland. It uses a smartphone app to connect the audience member with this shameful history.

As the app directs us through the “Merchant City” we hear the story of a young African man, ripped from his mother as she is sold into slavery.

Transported to Glasgow,



Director Adura Onashile

he becomes both an enslaved servant and an exhibited curio in the house of a rich merchant.

As we walk, ghosts of the city's slave-owning past appear on our screen.

We hear both the agonies of the young man's memories and the terrors of his bid for freedom

Powerfully written and performed, with excellent music and sound, this piece deserves to be adapted into a short film.

Mark Brown

Bookmarks

The socialist bookshop

32 Counties

The failure of Partition and the case for a united Ireland



Online booklaunch with author Kieran Allen

6:30pm, Friday 30 April
Watch at bit.ly/32counties

BILLIONS of people globally love, participate in and watch sport.

Almost half of the world's population watched the 2016 Summer Olympics in Rio De Janeiro, Brazil. And 3.57 billion tuned in to the 2018 FIFA World Cup in Russia.

Although these viewing numbers are huge, they're hardly surprising. People seek the escape or temporary relief that sport can provide.

To many people sport has become a dominant part of their life, breaking up the working week. Around 14.5 million people attended a professional English league football game in 2019.

Sport offers escapism. But it also highlights physical expression and collectivity that are suppressed by the fragmentation and atomisation of capitalist society.

The historian Eric Hobsbawm put it like this. "The imagined community of millions seems more real as a team of eleven named people. The individual, even the one who only cheers, becomes a symbol of his nation himself."

Supporting a team or being part of a club becomes what links people together, regardless of class or position in society.

And competition is useful, as we keep trying to beat each other rather than unite.

As with everything under capitalism, sport has become commodified. And because of its popularity it provides a huge market to make profits from.

This means it's politically important to the ruling class. We consume sport provided by the industry giants who seek to suck money from us.

English Premier League teams charge up to £97 for a matchday ticket—but that's just the tip of the iceberg.

Merchandising, sponsorship, broadcasting, betting and so on all make sport a multi-billion pound industry.

Over the past year betting company Bet365 joint CEO Denise Coates exploited the hardships of the pandemic to grab £469 million.

MUCH OF the revenue for the American Football league—the NFL—is generated by its television contracts. The league has signed a £81.38 billion deal with Amazon, Fox, CBS, NBC, ESPN that runs until 2033.

The Superbowl—the main event of the NFL—is plagued with advertisements.

A 30 second advertisement slot costs over £4 million.

And the marketing works—as snack food sales jumped by 10.3 percent to £290 million

WHOSE GAME ARE WE PLAYING? SPORT AND THE SYSTEM

Sport offers relief and a sense of collective identity denied to us by capitalism—but bosses also use it to make profits and divide us. Sam Ord explores the contradictions

and beer sales hit £864 million for the 2019 Super Bowl. It's easy to be dismissive of sport due to the profit hungry nature of the sporting industry.

And modern sport can easily be used for reactionary purposes.

Under the control of the ruling class, sporting events are attended by all classes.

This creates a false sense of "community", which is often used to boost nationalism.

It's not unusual to see England flags flying outside houses during international



Under the control of the ruling class, sporting events are attended by all classes

competitions. The rallying behind one side creates the illusion of hometown pride or patriotism being a stronger link than class. The enemy is either another town or another nation.

And this is beneficial for the ruling classes.

Divisions between groups of workers keep attention away from the bosses and makes us easy to exploit.

Sport is centuries old, but modern organised sport as we know it today was originally developed in British public

schools. Football was introduced to public schools in the 19th century, and for the first time the sport began to be codified.

Sport was used to boost rivalries firstly between different schools, then between classes. Public school teams who created the rules tried to impose them on local working class teams, often ending in fights.

Rivalry and competition were seen by headmasters as character building for the real world.

Pupils at these schools were educated to become leaders of the empire in order to compete with rival imperialist nations, such as France and Spain.

Regulated sport was then exported globally as a product of the empire.

Nationally based sporting events and international competition emerged with a rush at the end of the nineteenth century—and in the run-up to the First World War.

The revival of the Olympic Games came in 1896, the Tour de France in 1903, followed by the cycling race the Giro d'Italia in 1909.

Hobsbawm wrote, "British international matches pitted the nations of the British Isles against each other (in football: those of Britain in the 1870s, Ireland being included in the 1880s), or various parts of the British Empire (Test Matches began in 1877).

"The first international football match outside the British Isles confronted Austria and Hungary (1902)."

Sport strengthened valuable imperialist ties. The writer George Orwell branded it "war without weapons."

FOOTBALL across Africa and cricket in India and the Caribbean were key to win layers of the middle class to the idea of empire.

Sport was used by British military generals to create stronger, better soldiers. This idea was transported through the empire and many regiments used sport as a technique to recruit.

But they were also used to impose rules, as playing by Britain's sporting rules was another way to control colonised countries.

And the imperialist ties remain today.

The Commonwealth Games, formerly known as the British Empire Games happen every four years.

They boost capitalist relationships with colonised countries under the guise of unity, and of pride for the remnant of the queen's empire.

In football since the founding of organised teams there has been one constant—they are owned by the elite.

Mill and factory owners set up teams for workers to participate on their day off.

Cricket was exported across the empire

These teams were presented under the guise of promoting unity acting like a gift from bosses to workers.

That's why the West Ham football club in east London has hammers on its logo—as the team was formed from workers at the Thames ironworks.

But the reality was different. Similarly to the Empire Games, the sport was used to encourage fitness to create stronger and better workers—and rivalry.

Bosses used football to divide workers from different workplaces who were united by their class into petty competitiveness which continues today, and is central to capitalism.

Now the previous owners have been replaced with richer, more exploitative owners who similarly seek to use the sport to line their pockets.

THE Berlin Summer Olympics in 1936 was used by Adolf Hitler to promote his fascist ideas of white supremacy and antisemitism. Jewish athletes were not allowed to participate in the Games.

Sexism, homophobia and police brutality was highlighted by punk group Pussy Riot at the Sochi Winter Olympics in 2014 who claimed the event was a cover-up for human rights abuses.

The 2012 London Summer Olympics cost £11 billion despite a decade of austerity measures.

And Qatar's ruler will look to sport-wash itself when it hosts the 2022 FIFA World Cup.

Beyond the top tier established competitions and events, many people do participate and spectate on a grassroots level in local clubs and competitions.

IN REACTION to increasing ticket prices excluding fans from stadiums, many grassroots football teams popped up.

And a threat of a boycott by the Twenty's Plenty campaign over rising away game football ticket prices resulted in prices lowered to £30 per game.

This still excludes many people and campaigners still call for a £20 cap, but it's a significant move.

And the bigger the club, the higher the prices.

Tottenham Hotspur football

THE SUPERBOWL makes millions of dollars (top) Football fans protesting Super League plans (above)

club's season ticket was an eye-watering £1,895 last season. Teams, athletes and fans are seen as a product to trade and invest in.

Capitalism will continue to use sport to its advantage.

This became clear as the proposed European Super League (ESL) tried to launch itself last week.

Following pressure from fans and the Premier League, all six of the founding English teams have withdrawn from the competition.

Protests targeted stadiums and training grounds attracting chants of "Scum, scum, scum, out, out, out."

Banners read "Love for the working class game ruined by 'gr£££d'."

Ownership by big business will inevitably lead to further commercialisation of sport.

The bigger and more popular the sport, the more profit capitalists can squeeze out from fans and participants.

For sport to have real value, capitalism has to be defeated.



FOCUS ON IRELAND

How sectarian divides helped Britain rule

Divides between Protestants and Catholics came from those at the top writes Simon Basketter

THROUGHOUT ITS existence, Northern Ireland has been a political slum characterised by repression, sectarianism and poverty. The state enshrined Britain's policy of divide-and-rule. James Craig, one Unionist prime minister, said it was "a Protestant state for a Protestant people".

For half a century, the Ulster Unionist Party won every election, formed every government, supplied every cabinet minister, and took every decision.

Sir Basil Brooke, prime minister from 1943-1963 said he was "proud not to have a Catholic about the place"—he meant his servants. He added, "I recommended people not to employ Roman Catholics, who are 99 percent disloyal."

Sectarianism encouraged Protestant workers to look down on Catholic workers.

Divisions within the working class weakened its ability to fight. Though there were outbursts of militancy that attempted to overcome sectarianism—such as the unemployed riots of 1932.

This self-reproducing system had a weak spot—mass opposition.

Northern Irish towns had a deliberately discriminatory voting system in local elections. Rich businessmen could get as many as 25 votes while the unemployed had none. Elections were "gerrymandered"—boundaries fixed—to ensure a Unionist majority in predominantly Catholic areas.

Housing lists were static to keep the electoral fraud secure. Campaigns for fair housing or fair votes were a threat to the state.

A few hundred people assembled in the mainly Protestant area of the Waterside in Derry on 5 October 1968. The protest was to spark one of the biggest revolts against the British state. Around 600 civil rights protesters carried placards with messages such



BRITISH SOLDIERS line up people in Belfast in 1971

as, "class not creed". Their demonstration was banned.

Marching into the walled city was a privilege that was only available to the sectarian bigots of the Orange Order.

Police laid into the marchers and in armoured cars fought to drive the people back to Catholic ghettos.

Protesters erected barricades against the police.

In January 1969 B-Specials—paramilitary police—and other Loyalists repeatedly attacked a march organised by the left as it passed through Burntollet on the outskirts of Derry.

Barricades were erected again in the working class Bogside district, and the police were excluded from the area for three days as the march struggled into the city.

The barricaded zone was dubbed "Free Derry". The slogan, "You are now entering Free Derry" was painted on a wall in the Bogside.

This territorial exclusion of state forces showed the fragility of the sectarian state's control of many of the predominantly Catholic areas.

Derry was also the site of the Battle of the Bogside. This was large-scale rioting in August 1969 after police and

the B-Specials attempted a pogrom through the Bogside.

A single dairy reported having 43,000 milk bottles stolen over a three-day period to make petrol bombs.

The coercive capacity of the Northern Ireland state was running out. The British Labour government responded by propping it up by sending troops onto the streets.

What would later be described as "ethnic cleansing" took place on a massive scale.

Protestant gangs drove Catholic families from their homes—with extreme violence, often overseen by British soldiers.

Smashed

The assaults of the cops and later the British army taught that there would be no civil rights until the sectarian state was smashed.

The state responded with more and more repression in the form of internment without trial and the massacring of civilians on a civil rights march on Bloody Sunday in 1972.

The space of resistance was filled by armed struggle against Britain.

The depth of resistance meant that the British state could not repress Northern Ireland to stability.

But the repression did weaken the potential for mass resistance that could have ended the sectarian state.

The British determination to prop up the sectarian state led to 30 years of open conflict. That's the subject of our next column.

This is the second in a series of articles on the partition of Ireland. Read our coverage at bit.ly/SWPartition100

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Cop infiltrated the SWP and abused a woman

by SIMON BASKETTER

THE UNDERCOVER Policing Inquiry resumed taking evidence last week. One witness gave oral evidence last Thursday under the name of “Madeleine”.

Spy cop Vince Miller infiltrated the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) in Walthamstow, east London, from 1976 to 1979.

Madeleine said, “Vince Miller infiltrated my SWP branch. He claims he only had four one night stands, but that’s not true.”

“The undercover cops were embedded in the SWP, while reinvigorated fascism presented the real threat to public order and safety.”

Murders

“The National Front (NF) portrayed black people as muggers, and Asians as unsanitary, with 20,000 members. Racist murders were commonplace.”

“After repeated attacks on Brick Lane, protection was organised. Vince Miller called the area ‘heavily policed’ even though it wasn’t, and describes it as a mere



THE BATTLE of Lewisham helped to push back the fascist NF

PICTURE: SOCIALIST WORKER

‘territorial dispute’ between NF and SWP paper sellers.

“Vince Miller knew of an attack on us by fascist Derek Day. Why was that not reported? Why did we have to protect citizens with the police nowhere in sight?”

“My flat received threatening calls, and my flatmate was attacked by

fascists. Where are Miller’s reports on that? Instead, he reports on meetings about William Morris.

“We cared for Vince, and now know he cared so little for us.”

“Vince became SWP branch treasurer, was on the Social Committee and in the Industrial Group. He

socialised with us. He had plenty of opportunity to plant bugs in many people’s houses.

“The real subversion uncovered is the behaviour of the police, and their behaviour should be under scrutiny, not ours.”

“Miller reported SWP members taking weapons

to an anti-fascist rally in Lewisham and hid bricks for throwing, but it is not true.

“He contradicts this saying we got away from violence on the day. Another member of the SWP got his arm broken by uniformed officers but that’s not in Miller’s report

“The Battle of Lewisham is now considered a watershed moment in the fight against fascism, the moment when the NF was defeated.

“I read the reports on me with trepidation and anxiety.

“It’s wrong that other women have been denied their files and don’t know what their abusers reported about them.

“Facts turn out to be lies, truth has become falsehood. Vince did not fight with me for a better world but spied on me.

“Vince got information about my first marriage, which was before he was deployed. How did he get that? He records personal details.

“A cold, sexist version of the man is revealed in his reports, very different to the man I knew.

“Who else spied on me?

What events in my life led to this intrusion? I’m the subject of something redacted—what is that? Am I still spied on? If not when did it stop?

Child

“Vince recorded a pregnancy in our branch and the name the baby would be given. Does the child have a file too?”

“The secrecy around my documents mean I’m forbidden to discuss it with my husband, cutting off emotional support for us both. I want all reports on me removed from archives and destroyed.”

Justice Mittings, overseeing the inquiry, said it would ensure Madeleine is allowed to discuss the case with her husband.

Mittings has also promised that Miller’s real name would be revealed at some point.

Read Madeleine’s statement at bit.ly/Madeleineinquiry

● **THE Undercover Policing Inquiry is examining evidence from 29 undercover cops spanning the ten years between 1973 and 1982. Go to bit.ly/spy-cops**

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How French imperialism propped up slain ruler

Dictator Idriss Deby, killed last week, helped France cling on to its colonial legacy in Africa, writes **Charlie Kimber**

IMPERIALISM SUFFERED a heavy blow last week when Idriss Deby, the dictator of Chad in Africa, died. He was reportedly shot while leading the army against members of the Fact opposition movement.

There are alternative suggestions that he was eliminated by internal opponents.

Deby had ruled Chad for 30 years, acting as one of the most loyal servants of French imperialism. France kept him in office in return.

In 2019 2,000 French troops helped defeat a rebel movement.

And in 2008 French planes and soldiers halted rebels that had almost reached the presidential palace.

French politicians, from President Emmanuel Macron to fascist Marine Le Pen, rushed to express their deep regret at Deby's demise and to champion his memory.

There were no complaints when, after Deby's death, the military threw away all the constitutional rules and installed his son in power.

France, like other imperial powers, has always been determined to influence and direct its former colonies.

Thugs

Saturated with racism and colonial attitudes, it has repeatedly intervened alongside dictators and thugs across Africa to maintain its control and plunder natural resources.

French companies operating in the region—such as oil giant Total, bank BNP Paribas and telecom provider Orange—receive unstinting support from the French state.

Any government that seeks to restrict its operations is likely to be bullied into reversing its policy—or be removed. Chad is crucial to the whole operation.

Its capital N'Djamena is the central command hub for the West Africa region. Around 1,000 French troops are based there along with Mirage 2000 fighter jets.

But France, a declining and stretched power, struggles to keep its grip on the region.

The assault on Libya in 2011 by the Nato military alliance tore apart large areas of north and central Africa. Armed groups grabbed weaponry previously used by the Libyan regime or supplied by the external powers seeking to grab control in Libya.

There are now over 5,000 French troops across central Africa and the Sahara area.

A report in the Le Monde newspaper says that last year France and its partners killed more civilians than the groups they are supposed to be fighting.

Resentment

But that just creates resentment and resistance.

When France sent its forces into Mali, a former French colony, their mission was supposed to last only a few weeks. That was more than seven years ago.

And recently there have been mass revolts that give hope of real change.

In March a huge movement of young people in Senegal, a former French colony, rose against president Macky Sall.

They targeted French supermarkets Carrefour and Auchan as well as Total petrol stations. It took weeks for the government to regain control.

Demonstrators chanted, "France out of Senegal." All the imperialists must go and workers have to fight local rulers and their backers.

FRENCH PRESIDENT Emmanuel Macron in Chad for Deby's funeral last Friday

France 'bears responsibility' for the genocide in Rwanda, says new report

RIVALRIES BETWEEN the West and China have led to more of the truth being admitted about genocide in the central African country of Rwanda.

Between April and July 1994, some 800,000 people were slaughtered, mainly from the Tutsi minority group.

It's commonly said that the murders are the perfect example of a situation where the major powers should have launched "humanitarian" military intervention.

But two reports have underlined that there was too much imperialist intervention and it laid the basis for the killings.

The Rwandan government's analysis, released last week, said, "The French government bears significant responsibility for enabling a foreseeable genocide."

To bolster imperialist influence, the then French president Francois Mitterrand supported the Hutu-led government that orchestrated the killings.

Another report, released last month, said France was obsessed by fears of losing influence in Africa. It remained close to the "racist, corrupt and violent regime" that



French Marines in Rwanda

carried out the massacres and bore "serious and overwhelming" responsibility for what happened.

What's remarkable is that this report was commissioned by French President Emmanuel Macron. Successive French presidents have tried to obscure French culpability.

And even now the Macron commission cleared France of complicity in the actual genocide.

Yet it is well documented that French soldiers and government officials drove around Rwanda with enormous French flags displayed on their vehicles.

On seeing them, Tutsis would come out of hiding only to be killed by Hutu militias while the French did nothing.

And the French allowed the genocidal forces to flee into the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Once entrenched they played a central role in regional wars that claimed millions of lives.

The reason for this French partial admission of the truth is to seek a new accord with the brutally repressive regime of Paul Kagame.

Kagame had ruled Rwanda for 27 years, ruthlessly suppressing opposition. That doesn't bother his Western backers.

Rwanda has a powerful state-directed industry and acts as a centre for the export of minerals and gemstones.

Its army also can act as the cop of the region. For a long time Kagame, while repulsing France, was close to Britain and the United States.

But more recently it has moved heavily towards China, which has invested to extend its influence in Africa. The Rwandan army even has a brigade that takes orders in Chinese.

This inter-imperialist rivalry has forced the French to abandon denial of the past and seek to creep back into Rwanda.

Whoever wins out, the ordinary people of Rwanda have never had a look in as around them great powers compete for Kagame's favour.

Top cops altered Hillsborough witness statements, court told

by SADIE ROBINSON

SENIOR COPS and a lawyer altered witness statements to cover up police failings relating to the Hillsborough football disaster, a court has heard.

Ninety-six Liverpool fans died as a result of the 1989 disaster, after a crush built up in two pens of the stadium.

Trials of former solicitor Peter Metcalf, retired South Yorkshire Police (SYP) chief superintendent Donald Denton, and former detective chief inspector Alan Foster got underway last week.

Each denies two counts of perverting the court of justice.

Sarah Whitehouse QC opened the case against them at the Lowry Theatre in Salford on Tuesday of last week.

"These three tried to minimise the blame that might be heaped upon the South Yorkshire Police at the many different forms of inquiry that followed that dreadful day," she said.

"They did this by altering accounts given by police officers who were present on the day.

Accounts

They knew those accounts were going to end up being sent to a number of inquiries that would follow the disaster."

The court heard that Metcalf advised on alterations to be made, while Denton and Foster "saw to it that the advice was followed and the accounts were amended".

Metcalf was a partner in the Hammond Suddards solicitors' firm at the time of the disaster.

The court heard that he was asked to act for SYP insurers,



Peter Metcalf

Municipal Mutual Insurance, due to expected claims for compensation.

He was later asked to act for SYP at an inquiry into the disaster led by Lord Justice Taylor, and to represent it in any civil litigation.

West Midlands Police was appointed to gather evidence for the Taylor inquiry.

When it requested statements from SYP officers who had been on duty during the disaster, Metcalf recommended altering some of them.

Failings

Whitehouse said the effect of the changes "was to mask failings on the part of South Yorkshire Police in their planning and execution of the policing of the match".

She told the court that Hillsborough has "become connected in the minds of many as linked with cover-ups and attempts to hide the real facts".

And she added that the trial is not about the causes of the disaster or "whose fault" it was. Instead, it "is about the actions of the three defendants after the event".

The trial, expected to last 16 weeks, continues.

REMEMBERING the 96

OBITUARY

Neale Williams

1964-2021

COMRADES IN the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) and the Fire Brigades Union (FBU) will be saddened to hear of the death of Neale Williams at the age of 57.

Neale was one of the finest working class militants to have joined the ranks of the party and his loss will be keenly felt by all who knew him.

From the age of 16, Neale served in the merchant navy, before joining the London Fire Brigade in 1983.

FBU activity in support of the great miners' strike of 1984-85 brought him into contact with the SWP, beginning a lifelong commitment to revolutionary socialist politics. Neale was an

energetic and tenacious organiser and a fearless activist.

His skill lay in a clear, practical approach to politics—identifying the central fault lines in any situation, and attacking hard along what he felt to be the best axis of advance.

If he could be harsh and single minded at times, it was only out of a deep desire to see our side win. The compassionate side of his personality was always only a knowing smile away.

Neale drew deeply on the political knowledge and experience of those around him.

He often attributed his blunt style to the late Julie Waterson, who, as industrial organiser, schooled Neale during his early years in the party. But, in all things, there was no one whose advice and counsel



Neale Williams

he valued more than his partner, Jane Elderton.

Neale's achievements, both great and small, are too numerous to list here.

But I am sure he considered his central role in setting up Firefighters Against the Nazis,

a workers' section of the Anti Nazi League, as some of his most important work.

The same goes for his attempt to develop rank and file organisation in the FBU around the Red Watch group, in the wake of the national strike of 2002-3.

After he retired from the fire brigade, Neale worked for Southwark council, installing telecare.

It was a job he loved and where he continued to remain politically active.

Neale was a larger than life figure, incredibly dedicated, loyal, and with a generosity of spirit and concern for others that were unmatched.

He would think nothing of seriously inconveniencing himself to come to the aid, politically or

personally, of those around him. In the mid 90s the Tory government was engaged in another round of attacks on refugees and asylum seekers.

Neale organised a collection of toys from firefighters' families for the children at a local refugee hostel at Christmas.

This act, not of charity but of solidarity from one group of working class people to another, tells you all you need to know about Neale's character.

He was passionately committed to the idea that ordinary working people have the power to build a better world.

He leaves behind his partner, Jane, his son and daughter, Jack and Emma and many comrades who will miss him dearly.

Yusuf Timms

TELECOM

Strikes step up fight across BT Openreach

by NICK CLARK

DESPERATE BT Openreach bosses have “lost control” in a battle with a group of their own highly skilled engineers, according to a union rep.

The engineers—members of the CWU union—held their longest round of strikes in their dispute so far last week.

Strikers held more than 50 picket lines at BT workplaces.

One CWU rep told Socialist Worker that managers have spent the week trying to convince strikers to end the strike. Instead, strikers are only more determined.

“It’s just amateur hour at BT,” he said. “All they’ve done is wind the members up.”

The strikers—a group of 170 Repayment Project Engineers—are fighting to stop an attempt by bosses to change the nature of their job.

Bosses want to shift them onto a management grade, which would worsen terms and conditions for new starters, and remove union recognition.

During the week, managers



PICKETING IN Liverpool

PICTURE: @CWUGMERSEY ON TWITTER

tried to contact strikers to tell them the dispute was over, the rep told Socialist Worker.

“The members are upset because a local manager was ringing their personal phones throughout the day and late at night,” he said. The local manager did it “to gleefully announce they’ve changed the name of the management role and therefore you can come back to work”.

“But the worse terms and conditions and losing union

recognition is still there,” the rep said.

BT wants to pretend the engineers’ strikes have no impact. But workers know their action is causing a growing backlog.

Their job involves arranging for BT cables to be moved or protected during major building work—so a strike could cause disruption to some construction projects.

Bosses are desperate not to be seen to be beaten, as

an even bigger dispute is brewing across BT.

The CWU has said it plans to ballot all of its members across BT over a major “reorganisation” that could mean compulsory redundancies as well as attacks on pay and conditions.

More strikes are likely at Openreach—and in some areas the engineers are holding days of action to appeal for solidarity among other BT workers.

HEALTH

Into battle for the NHS

HEALTH campaigners held a day of action on Thursday of last week against the takeover of GP practices by a US healthcare giant.

Protests were organised across London and in Nottingham, Birmingham, Leeds and many other areas.

Operose Health, a British subsidiary of the US Centene firm, has taken over so many local doctors surgeries that it now has around 530,000 patients on its books.

One of those is The Laurels GP practice in north London, where some 50 protesters gathered.

Among them was Gordon Peters. He said, “This is a fundamental struggle for the protection of our rights which some of us thought we could take for granted.”

“Now we have to fight against the profiteers.”

In central London, around 50 people gathered at Operose’s headquarters to join a noisy protest. Former Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn was among them.

■ MORE THAN 150 porters, cleaners, switchboard and catering workers at Cumberland Infirmary

in Carlisle struck for three days from Friday. This follows four days of strikes in recent weeks.

The workers and their Unison union are furious that giant private contractor Mitie is refusing to pay NHS rates.

In an email to Unison, Mitie boss Phil Bentley claimed the company “simply can’t put ourselves out of business by agreeing to pay costs that aren’t ours to bear”.

Unison regional organiser Dave Atkinson responded, “It is our taxes that fund Mitie’s contract with North Cumbria Integrated Care NHS Trust.”

“It is scandalous that these taxes help pay for the Mitie bosses’ staggering wages and multi-million pound shareholder dividends.”

● Messages of support to enquiries@unisoncumbria.co.uk

■ SECURITY WORKERS at the Royal Berkshire hospital in Reading are being re-balloted for strikes as part of their long-running dispute.

The 20 Unite union members, who are employed by Kingdom Services Group, are demanding £12 an hour.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Reject cuts plan in Glasgow

OPPOSITION IS mounting to threats by Glasgow city council’s arms-length company Glasgow Life to close about 60 community centres, libraries, museums and sports venues.

The council is run by the Scottish National Party.

It has taken back into the council most of the external organisations that the previous Labour administration established.

But Glasgow Life continues to be run by unelected managers who are now implementing massive cuts.

The trade unions, which

have long warned of the threat of cuts, need to get behind the local community campaigns, and ballot members for strikes to save jobs and services.

Also within the council, equal pay campaigners are becoming increasingly frustrated.

Little progress is being made on establishing the fair pay system which was promised following successful strikes in 2018.

● Sign a petition against the cuts at bit.ly/GlasgowCuts and go to [Glasgow Against Closures](https://GlasgowAgainstClosures) on Facebook

LECTURERS

A victory in Scottish FE?

THE CAMPAIGN of strikes by lecturers across Scotland in the EIS-Fela union took a dramatic turn last week.

At issue is the replacement of lecturers by those doing the same job but without the terms and conditions needed to do it well. In the most extreme case, at Forth Valley College, lecturers were fired and rehired as “trainer/assessors”.

Members were furious after the employers walked away from a deal which they themselves proposed.

The two days of strikes a week was set to escalate to three days and there was also added a ballot for action short of strikes.

The escalation was timed to ensure the dispute became an important part of the Holyrood election.

First minister Nicola Sturgeon was forced to say that “fire and rehire is not acceptable” in

a direct reference to Forth Valley College.

This pressure meant that negotiations on Friday produced a new deal that is going forward for ratification by both sides.

If implemented it would give the EIS the tools to ensure that lecturers are not replaced.

However, ratification and implementation have not happened yet. And until then it’s essential to keep up the pressure.

National strikes were suspended for two of the three days this week, but will resume if ratification is not forthcoming.

Forth Valley branch is not waiting for the machinery to grind along.

It is out three days this week to demand immediate reinstatement of former lecturers to their posts.

● For information or to send messages of support email dongluckstein@gmail.com

CIVIL SERVICE WORKERS

Round two at the DVLA

HUNDREDS OF government workers are set to launch a second round of strikes in a battle against unsafe working conditions during the pandemic.

Workers at a major Driver Vehicle and Licensing Agency (DVLA) workplace in Swansea have announced plans to strike between Tuesday and Friday of next week.

They are demanding that bosses allow more of them to work from home after more than 600 coronavirus cases were reported among workers at the office in a year.

At present over 2,000 staff are being made to attend the site daily

The strike is set to be the second round of action by PCS members at the office in the dispute.

The PCS says more than 1,400 of them struck for four days in early April.

BRITISH GAS

Extra insult at British Gas

BRITISH GAS workers have reacted with anger as they discovered that parent company Centrica wouldn’t honour even rotten terms and conditions that were negotiated in February.

Workers have held 43 strike days over fire and rehire. When the deadline to sign the contract came, hundreds of workers left rather than bow down.

Those who stayed face a 15 percent pay cut and worse terms and conditions.

Talks were held between Centrica and government conciliation service Acas at the start of the year.

These talks led to new terms and conditions being negotiated. But now the company is using the excuse that new terms and conditions were not negotiated as a collective agreement. Workers who signed up for them did it on an individual basis. So they aren’t applicable to all.

ROUND-UP

■ AROUND 400 bus workers at Go North West in Manchester are in the ninth week of an indefinite strike against fire and rehire.

Bosses want to impose an inferior contract leaving them £2,500 a year worse off.

■ LONDON UNITED bus drivers in the west and south of the capital in the Unite union have suspended strikes after a new offer from RATP company bosses.

■ CARERS AND cleaning workers at Sage care home in north London are heading back to the picket lines after returning a 100 percent Yes vote to strike.

The members of the UVW union, who are mostly migrant workers, started

striking last year to demand a living wage and sick pay

They are also striking for trade union recognition for their chosen union, the UVW.

● Donate to the strike fund at bit.ly/sagecarehomefund

■ UNITE UNION members at Chivas Brothers are being balloted for strikes after talks over pay broke down.

The firm employs around 1,600 workers.

In December 2020, workers voted by 91 percent to reject a pay offer that equates to a pay freeze.

If the vote is for strikes, action could hit the company’s Kilmalid, Strathclyde Grain Distillery, Southern Operations and Northern Operations from the middle of May.

UNITE AND FIGHT TO KILL THE BILL

by ISABEL RINGROSE

IT'S TIME to take to the streets in greater numbers to kill the Tories' police bill.

International Workers' Day, Saturday 1 May, will be the third national day of action against the bill.

If it passes, protests will face severe restrictions. Cops will feel more able to unleash the sort of violence seen at some recent Kill the Bill protests and at the Clapham Common vigil for Sarah Everard.

The bill will also make life even harder for Roma, Gypsy and Travellers and bring in new criminal offences.

The Kill the Bill movement, made up of a coalition of groups, has called for a mass movement against the government.

In London there is set to be a rally in Trafalgar Square, and others have been called in Manchester, Sheffield, Leeds, and other cities and towns. It's vital there are protests everywhere against the Tories' repressive plans.

The bill cannot be beaten through manoeuvres in parliament—it is the street movement that has the potential to force change.

Already the protests have



THOUSANDS PROTESTED to Kill the Bill in London recently

PICTURE: GUY SMALLMAN

forced Labour leader Keir Starmer to say his party will vote against the bill on its second reading in parliament.

More pressure from below, at a time when the Tories are vulnerable—up to their necks in cronyism and

corruption—can damage them even further.

The protests on 1 May, could link up with more action by organised workers.

A meeting of trade unionists last Thursday resolved to take on the bill

and build the day of action.

The police bill is a direct threat to the trade union movement—and it must start mobilising against it.

Working class people hold immense power if they strike and walk out of workplaces

in defiance of the bill.

York university law lecturer Joanna Gilmore argued, "Our response has to be one of unity, solidarity and action."

"Just as we defend the right to strike by going out

on strike, we need to defend the right to protest by protesting."

And NEU education union joint general secretary Kevin Courtney urged "everyone on this call to get involved".

Courtney asked, "Does your trade union branch want to organise a protest that has some impact?"

"This bill affects you if you want to have an impact."

He added, "This is a huge step in the wrong direction for our country. It's right to resist it."

Trade unionists must now be out on the streets—and take the radicalism of the Kill the Bill movement into their workplaces.

Fury against the bill can be turned to rage at the system for the chaos it causes.

We can kill the bill but leaving the capitalist system intact will lead to further unjust legislation.

The power of organised united workers can bring about real change that many are currently fighting for.

The Tories and their bill must be a key focus on 1 May with as many people fighting back as possible.

For more on the trade union meeting against the bill, go to bit.ly/KTB2604

Essex cops target opposition to school's military programme

by SADIE ROBINSON

DOES CHALLENGING a school's policies warrant a visit from the cops? Essex police seem to think so.

UCU union member Michael tweeted a photograph last week showing children carrying guns as part of a cadet course at Burnt Mill Academy.

Four days later, a police officer was on his doorstep.

The officer claimed to be visiting over concerns that children



The photograph that Michael uploaded to Twitter showing school students carrying rifles.

could be identified.

Yet Michael had covered up faces so that this wasn't possible.

"I was absolutely stunned when I saw there was a policeman," Michael told Socialist Worker. "He

said he was there because the academy had been in touch with him about me."

"It's not appropriate for police to behave in a political way to stop dissent," he added.

In response to him

asking if any crime had been committed, the officer was forced to say no.

The school grounds are behind several houses, including Michael's.

They described the

shock of seeing children carrying large rifles.

"It was extremely alarming," said Jan, Michael's partner and a former teacher.

"Adults in uniform were showing them how to handle guns and then they were each given a gun."

The school has boasted that "a number of students with special educational needs and disabilities and those who need support with behaviour and emotional issues" are taking the cadet course.

"The school openly says it targets vulnerable

children," said Jan. "That's what's so disgraceful. You can teach children skills without putting guns in their hands."

Michael said he was "fuming with rage" at how the school apparently tried to use police to "harass" him.

"If the Tories get their police bill through, there will be cops on many more people's doorsteps," he said.

"It's a taste of things to come if we don't kill the bill."

Watch Michael take on the cop at bit.ly/Michael2604